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STRANGE SECRETS OF THE LOCH NESS MONSTER

WARREN SMITH

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Chapter I

PROOF FOR THE EXISTENCE OF THE LOCH NESS MONSTER

For at least fourteen hundred years, humanity has wondered about the alleged sightings of a huge "beastie" that occasionally surfaces from the dark depths of Loch Ness, Scotland. In the past forty years, there have been hundreds of reports from credible witnesses. A handful of grainy photographs have been produced by sighters that point to "something" in the murky waters. Many people have never doubted that the creature exists; others maintain a skeptical attitude until proof is brought forth in either photographs or a living or dead body.

Recently, "Nessie," as the reptilian beast of prehistoric appearance is affectionately called, hit the front pages of newspapers throughout the world. Headlined *Loch Ness Monster Lives: Expert*, a news dispatch from London, England reported that a leading British naturalist was convinced by photographs taken by an American research team that the fabled monster in Loch Ness is a living prehistoric reptile — or, perhaps, a family of such creatures.

The scientist was Sir Peter Scott, the son of

Antarctic explorer Robert Falcon Scott, and an eminent naturalist known throughout the world. Scott announced he was organizing a symposium that would be held to show the closely guarded Loch Ness photographs taken by the American team. "The most important thing shown is the flipper of the animal, which I find so convincing," reported the British scientist. "There is no known whale or dolphin which has a flipper of this shape. But there are flippers of the same general shape in fossil records of prehistoric reptiles!"

From Boston, a swift announcement followed that indicated the Academy of Applied Sciences would present the photographs of "Nessie" at a symposium to be held in Edinburgh, Scotland, where "invited scientists from around the world, many of whom have been studying the evidence," will meet. The symposium was planned by the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

The American photographic team was sponsored by the Boston-based Academy of Applied Sciences, a private foundation. The team spokesman was Robert Rines, a physicist, patent attorney and law school dean in Boston. "There's no question about it," Rines told reporters. "There is no chance of a hoax. All of the team members make their living on the basis of our integrity. We would not risk a hoax for something like this."

Dr. John Prescott, a director of the New England Aquarium and an expert of marine life, remained skeptical about the team's claims. Prescott was one of the scientists who had been given a preview of the Rines photographs. "Apparently he has something there," Dr. Prescott admitted. "From the photos, there is some sort of creature there. I'm a disbeliever, but from what I've seen, more work ought to go into studying the creatures."

A zoologist at the Smithsonian Institution, Dr. George Zug also viewed the photographic evidence. "This is additional proof that there is a population of living animals in Loch Ness that have been called the Loch Ness Monsters."

A woman at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology looked over the photographs some time before the news was printed. "They're simply mind-boggling," she informed newsmen.

Rines started taking underwater pictures in Loch Ness in 1972. His early photographs show a creature with spade-shaped fins or the end of a tail. Dr. Prescott indicated the older photographs were electronically enhanced by computer at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California. "The latest photographs compare quite closely to the early pictures," said Dr. Prescott. "They really make you believe you're looking at an animal."

The latest pictures were taken this past summer using a special high-speed camera system created by Dr. Harold Edgerton, an electrical engineer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Dr. Edgerton is well known for developing several high-speed photographic techniques. He is also famed for his development of strobe flash photography.

Dr. Prescott said the American team took their pictures with two camera systems. The first system was a sophisticated camera that was triggered by a Sonar (underwater sound echo) device. This advanced photographic system malfunctioned and failed to provide pictures of the creature. A second photo system comprised a camera, timer and strobe light. The system was fired every twelve minutes. This was the camera that caught the images of the Loch Ness monster. The camera was positioned forty feet below the surface of the murky lake.

Alan Gillespie, the engineer at Pasadena's Jet

Propulsion Lab who made the computer study of the film, reported there was "unquestionably" a real object swimming around in the dark waters of the lake in Scotland. But Gillespie added that there is no way of telling if the image on the negatives is the elusive and long-sought monster, an animal species already known to science, or an elaborate practical joke.

Gillespie's work at the lab involves using a computer to enhance photographs taken by U.S. spacecraft of the earth and other planets. Gillespie showed two of the photographs and they are admittedly a confused mass of dots, blurred shapes, and splotches of black, gray and white.

A check-out of the photos reveals:

Photo Number One: This depicts a grayish body against the black, inklike background of the lake waters. There are two triangular flippers (or fins) hanging down from the body. A long, arced neck can be seen rising from the top of the torso. A head appears to be located beyond the neck, but is separated from the neck by what may be a stretch of dark water.

Gillespie analyzed the dark gap between the head and neck. "It appears to be consistent with the background of water," he reported. "And, yet, whatever the object is, it seems to be connected to the curve that looks like a neck." The California scientist estimated that the object was located about seven yards away from the camera when the film was exposed.

Photo Number Two: The "monster" is much closer to the camera in this negative. Yet the murky waters of the loch interfered with clarity of the object. What appears to be a serpentine form can be seen in the left, lower corner of the negative. This could easily be interpreted as a neck of some pre-

historic creature. A grotesque object that may be a head can be seen at the end of the neck. With a little imagination, a viewer can "see" an eye, open jaws and a bony growth of some sort on the head.

Gillespie said he had encountered difficulty with interpreting the two photographs. "When the object was a little over nineteen feet away from the camera, it filled the negative frame," he stated. "But it was also very dim and vague. All you can see are the outlines, even though we've used computer enhancement. Yet when the object gets close to the camera, assuming it is as large as indicated, it becomes a version of blind men trying to describe an elephant by feeling the various parts."

There has always been difficulty in obtaining underwater photographs in Loch Ness. Obtaining a clear image on film from cameras beneath the surface may be impossible. This is due to the darkness of the water, the large amount of peat and other particles suspended in the lake.

"The water is the color of coffee," said Gillespie. "There appears to be something there in the lake, but, we don't know yet if it's a genuine animal or not. After many, many hours of studying these pictures, I haven't found the slightest evidence of fraud. In my opinion, Rines is honest, sincere and serious about the whole affair."

This opinion of Dr. Rines is also shared by his colleagues in Boston. An MIT official said: "If you could rate a man's reputation on a scale of one to ten, Rines would score an eight – probably a nine – among his colleagues in the scientific community. I can tell you now without any qualifications: This man is not a crackpot!"

While the furor over the pictures continued, the sponsors of the Edinburgh symposium canceled the project. "There cannot be a useful or impartial

discussion at this time," said a press release from the Royal Society of Edinburgh, the University of Edinburgh, and Heriot Watt University, the sponsors.

"The program was to be that, on the first day, evidence should be submitted by the invited experts to a restricted scientific audience and that an agreed press release would be made the following day," the sponsors said. "Recent wide publicity from prospective participants on both sides of the Atlantic, at variance with this understanding, has forced the Royal Society of Edinburgh and the associated universities, to the regretful conclusion that no useful or impartial discussion can take place at this time and under these circumstances."

John Dundas, a spokesman for the Royal Society, explained that "against a background of leaks, rumors and news stories it would not be possible to take a cool, clinical look in the normal manner at that discovery." The conference was postponed indefinitely.

The same day that the symposium was canceled, Sir Peter Scott disagreed with critics of Rines' photographs. "I would say there are between twenty and fifty of them in the loch," said Scott. "I believe they are related to the Plesiosaurus – a species that died out millions of years ago."

After the Scottish meeting was canceled, Rines showed one of the slides to a lay audience in Concord, New Hampshire. The negative depicted a reddish, rust-colored object that appeared to have two appendages, a long neck and a head. Dr. Rines informed his audience that the American team took the photograph last June in Loch Ness. He stated the neck was estimated to be ten feet long, the trunk about twelve feet broad. Other, clearer photographs showed a monster "looking right at us with its mouth open," the scientist said. "We think it will electrify the world."

The audience at Concord was composed of friends of the American team, students and interested lay people. Spokesmen for the group indicated they would let the scientific community decide exactly what is depicted on the slides and photographs.

A week after the Concord showing, Dr. Rines was in London for a news conference. "The only skepticism we've met has come from London's Natural History Museum," said the Boston scientist. "They've been hoaxed in the past and they have to be careful. But their hostile and emotional attack is not warranted."

Rines' comment came after several scientists at the Natural History Museum said the American's pictures proved nothing. Zoologist Gordon Sheals said: "There is no evidence to support the view that the supposed animal seen in the pictures exists or is alive." Sheals also was distressed because Rines and his English associate, Dr. Peter Scott, gave "Nessie" the scientific name of *Nessiteras Rhomboteryz*, Latin and Greek terminology meaning "the Ness monster with the diamond fin."

"These fancy sounding scientific words falsely suggest that the monster exists," claimed Sheals.

Generally, experts at the museum were dubious about the photographs. Several released a statement suggesting the pictures were worthless. One scientist, Chris McGovern of the Royal Ontario Museum's department of vertebrate paleontology, viewed the photographs in a more positive manner. "I'm satisfied there is sufficient evidence to support that there is an unexplained phenomenon of considerable interest in Loch Ness," said McGovern. "The evidence suggests the presence of large aquatic animals."

In order to obtain the scientific *Nessiteras Rhomboteryz* designation for the lake monster, Rines and Scott agreed to allow their photographs to be published in *Nature* magazine. The English scientific

journal published three of the American's photos in the news section, making no comment on their possible merit.

Critics took a long, careful look at the *Nature* pictures and echoed their skepticism. "They prove absolutely nothing," said the five top scientists at the London Natural History museum. Despite their doubts, the London experts indicated they would love to be able to believe in the famed Scottish lake monster.

"We are naturalists," said Dr. Alan Charig, curator of the fossil reptiles at the London museum. "If there are creatures in Loch Ness like this, it would be very exciting."

After the *Nature* article was published, everyone started throwing their pet theories around. One of the most interesting came from retired Scottish librarian Roy Muir, who claims to have been a monster hunter for the past fifteen years. "I've seen Nessie on four different occasions," Muir stated.

The Scotsman suggested that what the American team had photographed was an old movie model that vanished in the lake in the late nineteen sixties. At that time, Mirisch Films rented Urquhart Castle overlooking the loch for filming *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes*. One of the highlights of the film was to be the appearance of the Loch Ness monster. The film company brought a five-ton animated monster model to the loch. As soon as the model was launched onto the lake, it promptly sank. "The prop monster went to join its kin folk," said a Scottish radio announcer in a subsequent news broadcast.

Muir said he felt the monster's existence had finally been proved when the Rines team released their pictures. "I was one of the first people to congratulate them," he said. "But when I heard descriptions of the 'gargoylelike' head with two appendages, my memory

immediately went back to the model. I can remember clearly when it capsized and sank into the lake during the film making. The model fit almost the exact description of the photographs that Dr. Rines and his group are showing. I think they have made a mistake."

The thought of a five-ton movie prop floating in the depths of Loch Ness is indeed a mind-boggling thought. On the face of it, this possibility is absurd because anything that weighs five tons plunges straight down to the bottom. Yet, there have been many strange and mysterious things happening on the loch. This might well be the latest episode in Nessie's long and elusive existence.

The Rines photographs are a fascinating saga in the annals of the Loch Ness mystery. Hopefully, Dr. Rines and his colleagues will ask the U.S. government to end the controversy over the photographs. NASA, the government space agency, has developed a computerized photographic technique that "reads out" data from either photo negatives or prints. This system allows the agency to determine whether the object in a photograph is animal, vegetable or mineral. It is a complicated process based on the measuring of light reflection in a photograph. Running the Rines film through this system would determine whether the Loch Ness object is a living creature, an inanimate movie prop or a floating tree.

Until that time, it remains incumbent upon the scientific community to examine other approaches to solving the Loch Ness mystery. This would appear to be an appropriate time to answer some of the questions that may have occurred to the skeptical reader.

How long has the monster been seen in Loch Ness?

Sightings go back more than fourteen centuries. Reports have also come from other Scottish lochs, or

lakes. Legends about "water horses" and "monsters" go back beyond written history. The first real "flap" of sightings in Loch Ness took place in 1933, gaining Nessie considerable space in the world press. The sightings were first reported in the local newspaper, *The Inverness Courier*. The news wire services, English and American newspapers, rushed correspondents to the loch and their dispatches turned the Scottish monster into an international celebrity. Since then, hundreds of people have reported seeing "something" in the loch.

Why did the sightings increase in 1933?

Until then, there was a single road around the loch. Known as General Wade's road, the unpaved thoroughfare was constructed in 1715 as an access route to the Scottish highlands. The road was completed shortly after the Jacobite Rebellion which saw the Highlanders rebel against the English throne. The old road seldom provided an unobstructed view of Loch Ness. When the route did approach the lake, the view was often obscured by trees, brush and other natural obstacles.

A new road was completed around the loch in the early 1930's. This route provides a clear view of Loch Ness, the largest stretch of water in Scotland. The narrow body of water is twenty-five miles long and about a mile in width.

Experts on the Loch Ness phenomenon claim the new road allowed greater access to the loch. It also provided a better view of the lake's surface. Perhaps more important is the fact that extensive blasting took place when the new road was built. The explosions may have caused the creature to leave an underwater cave and investigate the strange noises on the surface.

What is Loch Ness?

It is the largest of the three inland lochs – or lakes – in the "Great Glen" valley stretching across Scotland. The lochs are Ness, Locky and Oich, all linked together by the Caledonian Canal that was constructed in the earlier quarter of the past century. Recently, tests indicated that Loch Ness is the largest body of water in the British Isles. A depth of 972 feet has been sounded out at one point near Urquhart Castle. Waters of Loch Ness seldom freeze and the temperature in winter is around thirty-five degrees Fahrenheit during major cold spells. The lake bottom consists of hard yellow clay, bare rock and a thick peatlike mud.

The Oich, Foyers, Moriston and Tarff rivers flow into Loch Ness. There are many other smaller creeks, or burns, that also feed the lake. Several divers have reported that the loch's sides are honeycombed with immense underwater caverns. While this has not been proven, some people feel that Nessie – or a whole family of monsters – lives in these subterranean caves.

Is the loch connected to the sea?

The fresh-water lake has a "sea loch" in the Caledonian Canal that could provide access to whales, dolphins or other marine creatures. However, while these large ocean animals might gain access to the lake, it is probable that the salt-free water in Loch Ness would prove troublesome to them.

What does the Loch Ness monster look like?

If Scotland Yard, Interpol or the Federal Bureau of Investigation were to put out a wanted poster on the creature, it would read:

Wanted: Information leading to the apprehension of an unknown water creature. Suspect is known as "Nessie" in Loch Ness, as the "Morag Monster" in Loch Morar. Uses the alias of "water-horse" or

"water-bull" in other Highland lakes of Scotland. Sometimes known as the "Pooka" and "Piast" in Irish fresh-water lakes. Early Norsemen referred to the creature as the Sea-Orm or Skimsl. In the United States, where the creature is seen frequently in fresh-water lakes, the alias is Oscar, Slimy Slim and other terms.

Description: General appearance is similar to sea serpents reported by mariners. *Height:* Unknown. *Weight:* Unknown. *Color:* Frequently reported throughout the world as grayish, rust-colored and blackish. *Eyes:* Frequently said to be about the size of a saucer with a reddish coloration. *Neck:* Serpentine in appearance, often reported as being from two to nine feet in length. *Face:* Sometimes said to resemble a serpent; has been described as "doglike" or "like a horse or bull" by some observers. *Hair:* Some people have reported a hairy mane hanging down from the juncture of the beast's head and neck. Color of this mane ranges from white to a reddish brown. Remainder of the suspect's body is free of scales or hair. Suspect is believed to move through the water by use of fins or webbed feet and legs. *Length:* Creature in Loch Ness is estimated to be forty-five feet from tip to tail. Other ocean or lake monsters have been reported to be up to two hundred feet long. Sighters often describe the creature as grotesque in appearance.

Caution: Suspect will become provoked and attack if rocks or other objects are thrown at it. However, most observers report the suspect is fairly docile, despite a frightening appearance. It seems to be curious about boats, people and other objects encountered. A few cases of man-eating monsters have been reported, largely from recent dispatches from the Soviet Union. The Russian lake monster is considered to be a meat-eater.

Are there photographs of the Loch Ness creature other than Dr. Rines'?

After the rash of sightings on Loch Ness in 1933, Sir Edward Mountain financed twenty men to watch the lake with cameras during daylight hours. Their expedition produced several still photos and some movie film. Like most pictures of Nessie, the Mountain photos were taken from a long distance. Most film is indistinct and difficult to judge. As verbal reports are not accepted by the scientific community, the monster has been given little attention by academia.

What is the Loch Ness monster?

We can only conclude that the lake monsters seen in Loch Ness and other bodies of water around the world are an unknown animal. As will be discussed in a later chapter, there are many theories concerning the origin of these creatures. No single theory will neatly enclose the growing mass of evidence. When the facts are finalized, we may discover the lake monsters and sea serpents comprise several unknown species of marine life.

Could giant sea creatures exist without science knowing about them?

Large portions of the land area of our planet are unexplored. No one can flatly state what lies within the dangerous boundaries of the Brazilian jungles. The terrain is too dangerous, the environment too deadly, to currently permit the Brazilian boondocks to be mapped, surveyed and settled.

We know even less about the depths of the world's oceans and lakes. Until recently, technology did not permit people to penetrate lakes and oceans to any great depth. Even today, we are limited in our ability to go to great depths.

Science is always in a state of flux. New creatures

and reclassification of existing data is always a part of the scientific discipline. As an example, the research ship *Albatross* was off the coast of Chile, South America in 1888 when a primitive, elongated fish was brought to the surface. The fish was five to six feet long, possibly larger. The body contained a large, thick-lipped mouth and a row of double fins. A photograph of the fish is filed in the U.S. National Archives, Washington, D.C. This is all we know about this strange creature of the sea. Shortly after the photograph was taken, a seaman on board the *Albatross* shoved the carcass into the sea. Science has never obtained another specimen of this unusual fish. It is believed to live at a depth of at least 4,000 to 5,000 feet.

Another new sea creature was discovered in 1938 in the Indian ocean. A lobe-finned creature, the *coelacanth (Latimeria chalumnae)* weighs up to 160 pounds, grows to five feet in length, and was believed extinct until the specimen was obtained. Since then, several more of these primitive fish have been caught. A *coelecanth's* body is protected by armorlike rows of scales; the wide mouth is filled with razor-sharp conical teeth.

A research ship was trawling in the ocean off the Cape of Good Hope in 1959 and brought up a larval eel that measured more than six feet long! A normal eel larva is around two to three inches, growing to three to six feet at maturity. With a six-foot larva, could we expect to find eels a hundred to two hundred feet long in the ocean depths?

During a recent symposium conducted by the International Geographic Congress at the United Nations, a scientist conceded that prehistoric creatures still exist in our oceans. He explained that several shark's teeth, measuring up to one foot in length, have been found. "To hold teeth of that size, a shark

would have to have a jaw span of fifteen to twenty feet," the oceanographer explained. "Frankly, we have barely started to catalogue the various forms of marine life in our oceans. What we may ultimately find in the deepest regions of the seas is beyond any man's imagination."

Sometime in the future, we can expect the mystery of the Loch Ness and similar monsters to be solved. When that occurs, we may discover that some type of prehistoric life has coexisted with humanity for millions of years.

Is there evidence from Loch Ness other than eye-witness reports and photographs?

The use of sonar equipment has produced evidence of "large objects" moving through Loch Ness. In 1968, The Department of Electronic and Electrical Engineering from the University of Birmingham, England tried out a new digital sonar device at the loch. Professor D. Gordon Tucker and senior research associate Hugh Braithwaite beamed an emission across the loch, linking the unit to a 16 mm camera that exposed one frame of film every ten seconds. In the December 19, 1968 issue of *The New Scientist* magazine, they stated their equipment picked up readings from objects that were tagged A, B and C.

Object A rose swiftly from the lower depths of Loch Ness at a speed of around one hundred feet per minute. This unknown object reached a maximum speed of six knots before it disappeared off the scope. Investigators felt that Object B could have been a school of fish hovering in the water, or a stationary object of some type. Object C was the most interesting, reaching fifteen knots in speed, reading out at several feet in length, and rising and diving in the lake at a maximum of 450 feet per minute.

In his report in *The New Scientist*, Braithwaite

considered the objection that the objects might b fish. The fast speed, he wrote, ". . . makes it seem very unlikely, and fishery biologists we have consulted cannot suggest what fish they might be. It is a temptation to suppose they must be the fabulous Loch Ness monsters, not observed for the first time in their underwater activities."

In the Letters to the Editor Column in *The New Scientist* of January 9, 1969, a reader wondered if the sonar readings could have been echoes from peat that had sunk into the lake. The writer theorized that when the peat dropped to the bottom, a form of gas might be released into the water. While the sonar reading might indicate some type of object, it was not necessarily a live animal nor the Loch Ness monster. The writer went on to mention that alleged monsters in other lakes around the world had turned out to be vegetable "mats" and that Nessie "may be shown to be, literally, a load of old rubbish."

Has a lake monster ever been captured?

Many investigators believe that a creature of unknown species was pulled out of a lake in Utah during the past century. Several of the pioneer Mormon settlers around Salt Lake City, and in isolated areas of Utah, heard the Indians refer to the Great Salt Lake as the home of the "dark ones" or the "storm spirits." Several other fresh-water lakes, notably Utah Lake, south of the Mormon city, were believed by the Indians to contain large, grotesque water creatures.

The Shoshone Indians told historian Austin Fife that such a creature lived in Bear Lake. "They represented it as being of the serpent kind," wrote Fife, "but having legs about eighteen inches long on which they sometimes crawl out of the water a short distance along the shore. They also say it spouts water upwards

out of its mouth."

The Bear Lake monster hit the headlines in the July 27, 1860 edition of the Salt Lake City *Deseret News*. S.M. Johnson was traveling along a road near the lake when he saw something in the water that appeared to be a drowned person. The newspaper reported:

". . . The road being some distance from the water's edge he rode to the beach and the waves were running pretty high. He thought it would soon wash into shore. In a few minutes two or three feet of some kind of an animal that he had never seen before were raised out of the water. He did not see the body, only the head and what he supposed to be part of the neck. It had ears or bunches on the sides of its head nearly as big as a pint cup. The waves at times would dash over its head, when it would throw water from its mouth or nose. It did not drift landward, but appeared stationary, with the exception of turning its head. Mr. Johnson thought a portion of the body must be on the bottom of the lake or it would have drifted with the action of the water."

After Johnson's story appeared in the newspaper, several other early pioneers stepped forth and reported their encounters with the creature in Bear Lake. In another story in a later edition of the paper, three witnesses reported that

". . . their attention was suddenly attracted to a peculiar motion or wave in the water, about three miles distant. The lake was not rough, only a little disturbed by a light wind. Mr. Thomas Slight says he distinctly saw the side of a very large animal that he supposed to be not less than 90 feet in length. Mr. N.C. David doesn't think he saw any part of the body, but is positive it must have been not less than forty feet in length, judging by the wake it left in the rear. It was going south, and all agreed it swam

with a speed almost incredible to their senses. Mr. David says he never saw a locomotive travel faster and thinks it made a mile a minute easily. In a few minutes after the discovery of the first, a second one appeared following in the wake. It appeared to be much smaller, appearing to Mr. Slight to be about the size of a house. A large one, in all, and six small ones hied southward out of sight.

"One of the large ones, before disappearing, made a sudden turn to the west for a short distance; then back to its former track. At this turn Mr. Slight says he could distinctly see it was a brownish color. They could judge somewhat their speed by observing known distances on the other side of the lake, and all agreed that the velocity with which they propelled themselves through the water was astonishing. They represent the waves that rolled up in front and on each side of them as being three feet high from where they stood. This is their statement as they told me (the *Deseret News* reporter). Messrs. David and Slight are prominent men, well known in this country, and both of them are reliable persons whose veracity is undoubted. I have no doubt they would be willing to make affidavits to their statement."

During the next decade, several other stories of the Bear Lake monster appeared in the *Deseret News, The Semi-Weekly Herald* and other Utah pioneer media. One of these news dispatches indicated that a baby monster had been pulled from Bear Lake near the community of Fish Haven. The monster was said to have a large mouth, "small legs" and was "twenty feet long (and) propelled itself through the water by the action of its tail and legs."

None of the early Utah newspapers mentions what happened to the small, baby monster after capture. This has led many investigators to label the whole affair about the Bear Lake creature a hoax. Others

believe the monster may have been captured. They point out that early Utah was a frontier area. There were no facilities for refrigeration. Icing down a body that was twenty feet long would be quite an undertaking in pioneer days. Keeping the beast around would create a terrible stench from a rotting carcass. What probably happened is that the Bear Lake monster ended up as fish food or fertilizer in someone's garden patch. Like all mysteries connected with lake monsters and sea serpents, there is no physical evidence to indicate these creatures exist. Yet there is a similarity in sightings around the world, a pattern that indicates something is swimming in the depths. Something strange, different and possibly prehistoric in origin.

Have Lake Monsters been seen behind the Iron Curtain?

There have been several highly reliable sightings in Siberian lakes. A group of Russian scientists from Moscow University were checking mineral veins in the Kular mountain range near Lake Khaiyar, in the Yanski region of Yukutia. Headquartering their expedition at the village of Khaiyar, the group was intrigued by reports of a monster in the lake.

According to the villagers, the monster could be heard splashing in the lake at night. Several hunters had reported seeing the Russian "beastie" during their hunting trips along the shore. Yet, when the scientists went to talk with the alleged eyewitnesses, they were not available.

Still interested in the claims, several of the scientists waded through the marshland to the shores of Lake Khaiyar. What happened was reported by G. Rukosyer in the November 21, 1969 issue of *Komsomolskaya Parade*. Deputy assistant to the leader of the scientific expedition, Rukosyer stated:

". . . N. Gladkika, a biologist and staff member o the Yakut Branch of the Academy of Science literally ran into it quite unexpectedly. Here is how i happened. Gladkika went out into the lake to dra water and saw a creature that had crawled out ont the shore, apparently to eat grass – a small head on long gleaming neck, a huge body covered with jet blac skin, a vertical fin along the spine. Badly frightened Gladkika ran to wake the chief of the biologica station. When the workers at the station ran to th lake with cameras and rifles, the 'monster' had alread gone. Nothing remained except the trampled grass They thoughtfully inspected the shore but failed t find any trace of grazed grass. Though the weathe that morning was very calm, there were waves on th surface of the lake. These were evidently caused by the creature when it dove into the water. Returning to his quarters, Gladkika hastily made a sketch of the animal as he remembered it.

Later, the animal reappeared on the lake shore and was viewed by several other members of the expedition. Rukosyer wrote: "Suddenly a head popped up in the middle of the lake, then a large dorsal fin. The creature pounded the water with its long tail, producing waves on the surface of the water. You can imagine our astonishment when we realized, with our own eyes, that the stories about the creature in Lake Khaiyar were true."

Rukosyer went on to state that the lake was usually empty of fish, although neighboring waters were always producing plentiful catches of several varieties. He reported that the lake was located over a break in the earth's crust, that the fault line had developed a warm body of water. Wild ducks and geese are also said to avoid landing on the lake which the monster inhabited.

A geologist and apparently fairly conservative,

Rukosyer ended his report by speculating on what type of creature the monster might be. He speculated as to whether it was a new, unknown species or a throwback to some prehistoric and supposedly extinct ichthyosaur. The ichthyosaur was a fishlike marine reptile that existed from the Triassic to Cretaceous geological periods. They are believed to have become extinct about 63 million years ago at the start of the Tertiary epoch.

Gladkika's drawing of the creature depicts a reptilian with a long and narrow neck tapering up from the body. There are also tiny, slitlike eyes on a serpentine head. The vertical fin atop the huge body is slightly ridged in the drawing. The fin is directly on top of the black-skinned torso. Shading indicates a possible bony projection into the fin. The size of the animal is unclear, but the Russian account indicates it was very large.

Investigators point to the Russian drawing as being similar to the creature captured on film at Loch Ness by a London surgeon, Dr. Kenneth Wilson. Another Scottish eyewitness, Arthur Grant, sketched what he had seen on Loch Ness; his drawing is also similar to the Russian picture.

Centuries-old folk tales in Russia and other northern countries in that region of the world tell of fierce lake monsters. Some of these stories tell of man-eating creatures that terrorized the countryside, devouring farm animals, children and pets. "Until recently very little credibility was attached to these old stories," said Dr. L.D. Kravchev, a specialist in ancient myths. "With the reports coming in from lake districts of something unusual, we may discover there was a basis in fact for these tales."

Dr. Kravchev and several Russian colleagues are currently attempting to link fairy tales to a factual basis. "If you go back into folklore, you find many

stories of water monsters, sea serpents and other monsters," he told newsmen recently. "Until now, we have discredited these reports as nothing more than the imaginative product of ancient minds. Sightings in our lakes indicate there may be a family of prehistoric creatures that have survived through the ages until the present time."

How could such monsters be overlooked by humanity?

Dr. Kravchev believes that mankind has only recently moved to settle in isolated areas of the world. "During the last three decades – from the end of World War II – has settlement of our Siberian region started earnestly," he said. "The people simply were not there to see these creatures. A large lake can hold many secrets. Apparently these creatures are amphibians, able to live in the water or on land. They may not surface except at night. Their daylight appearances near the shore may be very rare. Should they be seen by a trapper, a hunter or a passer-by, we would give little credence to his report. After all, something like a prehistoric creature isn't supposed to exist in the age of *Sputnik*."

Russian scientists are noted for checking out the strange and unusual. They have made remarkable progress in testing paranormal phenomena and their work in extrasensory perception is quite extensive. If Dr. Kravchev and his Russian colleagues send an expedition to lakes alleged to hold monsters, they may produce the first physical evidence of the monsters' existence.

Dr. Kravchev admits he will settle for photographic evidence.

"I don't think anyone in the world wants to harm these creatures," he stated. "We don't know enough about them to consider killing one and hauling it into the laboratory. Imagine that you're hunting and you

have an opportunity to kill one of these monsters. You might be destroying the last male or female in the species. The species could become extinct with a single shot. Therefore, we feel that good motion-picture film, or even still photographs, will be adequate evidence of their existence. Naturally, we would want to study the animals in a manner that would not harm them or disrupt their environment."

Couldn't a submarine go to Loch Ness and end the mystery?

First, we must remember that the water in the lake is extremely murky. Visibility is very limited near the lake surface; the depths are extremely dense. However, small submarines have been used in the loch. Starting in 1969, the *World Book Encyclopedia* of Chicago sponsored Dan Taylor and his *Viperfish*, a small one-man submarine. The unique, canary yellow craft was designed, built and operated by the Texan. After fixing some malfunctioning equipment, Taylor made several dives into the loch without making contact with anything resembling the Loch Ness monster. His underwater surveillance did produce additional data on the terrain of the lake. This included the possibility that swift whirlpools are scattered far below the surface of the lake.

The *Pisces*, another well-equipped underwater vehicle, made forty-seven forays into the loch that same year. The sub made contact with an object that moved too swiftly to be identified. The *Pisces* located the underwater site of an old sunken ship and the location of many ancient weapons that had been dumped in the lake some time in the past.

Investigators have indicated that the Loch Ness and other lake monsters are frightened by unusual or loud noises. This would cause the monster to flee in the opposite direction from a submarine. As water is

an excellent conductor of sound, the click of instruments or the purr of a submarine's motor might panic the "beastie." Also, the Scottish lake is a relatively large body of water and a sub could make contact only by random cruising. It could require days, weeks, perhaps even years for the sub to make contact. Then, the monster might scurry away without being photographed.

What other methods have been used to lure the monster?

Dr. Robert H. Rines, the Boston scientist with the controversial underwater pictures, checked the creature's reaction to a sexy lure. A prop monster was constructed, then covered with salmon oil. The prop was lowered into the lake and, within hours, had vanished from the surface. Although the prop was short-lived, Dr. Rines obtained an important sonar reading indicating that a large, unidentified object was maneuvering in the lake near the exotic mock monster.

A few years ago, a German expedition came to Scotland and trolled the lake. Their bait was a young piglet attached to a large hook. While there are local laws forbidding harm to the Loch Ness creature, the Germans planned to hook the beast, pull it to the surface for photographs, and then release it. Exactly how they planned to disengage the hook is still a mystery!

The German group was composed of laymen. It was headed by Hans Rabinkorff, a retired jeweler and part-time adventurer. Rabinkorff lived in Yugoslavia prior to World War II, becoming a partisan freedom fighter against both German and Russian forces. "I fought with the Red partisans against the Nazis," Rabinkorff stated. "When it became evident that the Communists were too bold for Moscow, I fought

against the Russian domination of our country. Eventually, I was forced to leave my homeland and settle in West Germany."

Rabinkorff's interest in lake monsters and sea serpents was triggered by an incident that occurred in the mountains of Yugoslavia. "We were preparing to attack a German supply train that carried explosives," he related. "To arrive at the target, we had to travel through the mountains by foot. It was during the coldest months of winter. The snow was incredibly high. The wind was cold and we almost froze to death, trying to find passes that would allow us to carry the explosives, guns and ammunition through the mountains."

The Yugoslavian guerrilla fighter was to meet with a second group of partisans at the lower edge of a lake. The water was partially frozen over when Rabinkorff and his group camped to wait for their comrades. "One morning I heard one of the men scream," Rabinkorff said. "Actually, he was just a boy of about fourteen. He came into the camp, eyes wide, trying to sputter something out. I thought the Germans had found out about our mission. Instead, the boy jabbered about something in the lake."

The guerrillas ran out of their small tents, passing a large group of rocks which hid the lake from their view. "There it was!" said Rabinkorff. "A perfect example of a lake monster splashing around in the cold water. It was swimming in water that had not frozen over. The tail was rising up and down, striking the edge of the ice around the unfrozen part. The animal was making itself an ice-free area in the lake. At that time I had never heard of a lake monster, of course, so neither I nor my men were prepared for what we saw. We watched the creature for perhaps a half hour, discussing what it might be, and won-

dering if we should shoot it. One of the older men in our party had heard some peasants talk about such creatures. He said there was a superstition that bad luck would hound anyone who hurt the monster. That was enough for us to lay down our guns. We didn't need a hex on us – real or imaginary."

Rabinkorff went on to say that the Yugoslavian lake monster was around forty feet from head to tip of tail. "The neck was approximately six to nine feet in length, tapering out from the body," he said. "The tail was also tapered, but was somewhat larger and certainly more powerful than the neck. The head had the appearance of a horse and there was a reddish brown fringe of hair encircling the neck where it met with the head. All I can say about the head is that it was about three feet long, perhaps two and a half feet in width. Much larger than you might expect.

"As the creature was in the water, we could actually only speculate on the full length," admitted Rabinkorff. "We did see a hump rising up from the body and, atop that, was a fin. This wasn't a single fin, but actually two fins that seemed to be joined together."

While the guerrillas watched, the boy who had first spotted the creature moved cautiously out onto the ice. "The animal was about a hundred yards from the shore," said Rabinkorff. "The boy went out about a third that distance, then stopped and shouted at the thing. It had stopped tossing its tail about by then and, when he yelled, the long neck turned and the needlelike eyes stared at the boy. Then, the eyes opened and revealed a pupil that was the size of a teacup."

The guerrillas watched as the monster cocked its head in a quizzical, childlike attitude. The only sound was the wind moving briskly through the

trees. The boy took several steps toward the monster, holding out his hand and gently singing a tune. "Someone called to the lad about not getting too close," recalled Rabinkorff. "I heard one of the men mutter something about wishing he had a camera. As he moved closer, the boy still crooned his song and then started moving his arms in a rhythmic motion. He was perhaps fifty yards from the monster, still crooning, when the animal dived. The boy wheeled and ran back across the ice. As he ran toward us, the creature roared up out from under the ice near him, tail thrashing, roaring like a giant bull."

Fortunately, the young man reached safety on the shore. "The monster was in a rage," said Rabinkorff. "He bellowed like a wounded creature. The tail rose again and again, smashing the ice into tiny pieces. During one dive, the creature came up with its tail striking out, and we saw that the belly or underside was a different color. The part of the body we had observed until then was a chocolate brown in coloration. The underside was light gray and, toward the lower part, was yellowish."

After displaying aquatic prowess, the monster made a final dive and failed to appear. "But we could see a wake moving away from us across the lake," Rabinkorff told newsmen. "Judging by the size and speed of the wake, the creature was moving at a fast, almost an incredible, speed for its size."

After waiting at the lake for two days, the second band of partisans failed to meet Rabinkorff's guerrilla group. "We learned later they had been captured by a Gernam patrol," he stated. "We moved out on the morning of the third day. During the rest of our time there, the monster never reappeared. Several of the men checked along the shoreline, but there was no sign of the animal."

Rabinkorff claims that the creature resembled a

plesiosaur, a giant sea reptile that existed during the Jurassic Period in the middle of the Mesozoic Age. Much of the world was covered with shallow oceans and lakes at that time, a favorable environment for aquatic reptiles. Plesiosaurs reigned from around 180 million to 135 million years ago. They were similar to a seal in body appearance, had a long, tapering neck, a frightening reptile's head and a short but heavy tail. They had large, broad flippers to propell them through the water.

"The only difference is that the lake creature had a larger tail than what we might expect on a plesiosaur," said Rabinkorff. "I presume that evolution may have increased the tail size. We know that one type of plesiosaur – known as the pliosaur – evolved into a short-necked creature with a round body. Perhaps the lake creature had undergone the same changes."

Rabinkorff became obsessed with the monster. "I thought about it constantly," he admitted. "I wanted to return to the mountains after the war and photograph the animal. But I ended up in a displaced person's camp in West Germany after the Russians put out a reward for my capture."

The camp was filled with homeless people from all areas of Europe. Rabinkorff became acquainted with his fellow refugees, asking about monster sightings in their homelands. "An old woman from Poland said her husband used to see a monster when he was fishing on a lake near their home," he related. "The creature frightened her husband when it came too close to his boat one day. He never fished the lake again. A woman from a small town in Prussia said there were old legends in that region about lake and river monsters. A soldier who had fought in the Finnish army mentioned that he had been on ski patrol one night and saw something large as a monster – he said it looked like a giant lizard – on a beach by

a mountain lake."

After the war, Rabinkorff settled in Germany and eventually set up a small business. His hobby became a quest for more information on lake monsters and sea serpents. "During my vacations from business, I went to Sweden, Denmark and other countries with legends about these creatures," he said. "I've visited Loch Ness several times and, to date, have never even caught a glimpse of the monster. But after that experience during the war, I know Nessie exists. I think that down in the depths of the oceans and lakes are creatures that go back to the dawning of time."

Rabinkorff speculates that folk tales of ancient knights doing battle with dragons may have a basis of truth. "A plesiosaur could exist on land or in the water," he stated. "They would have been a formidable barrier to settling some of the outlying districts during ancient times. Many of them may have been killed off when humanity spread out over the surface of our earth."

How does science view the possibility of lake monsters and sea serpents?

With considerable skepticism. Until acceptable physical evidence is developed, the majority of scientists are unwilling to commit themselves to investigating what is yet a legendary creature. The mass of evidence from eyewitnesses continues to grow; however, their statements are often fragmentary and contradictory. When Nessie or another lake monster or sea serpent is photographed under scientifically acceptable circumstances, the experts will rush to check out these mysterious animals. As an anthropologist wrote in a scientific journal: ". . . survival of some extinct race of saurians is a thing to thrill the imagination of the scientific mind."

Chapter II

HISTORICAL RECORDS AND MODERN OBSERVATIONS

The first mention of an aquatic monster in Loch Ness was in a biography of St. Columbia, the Irish saint who converted the Picts to Christianity. The Picts were a tribe living in North Britain, a group absorbed by the invading Scots around the sixth or seventh century. St. Columbia's biography was written about a hundred years after he died by a fellow countryman, Adamnan. An incident with the Loch Ness creature was entitled *Of the driving away of a certain Water Monster by Virtue of the Prayer of the Holy Man.* The encounter took place near the head of the loch around 550 A.D. It reads:

". . . At another time, again when the holy man was staying for some time in the province of the Picts, he found it necessary to cross the river Ness. When he came to the bank, he noticed some of the local people burying an unfortunate fellow, whom – so those in the burial party claimed – some aquatic monster had shortly before snatched while he was swimming and viciously bitten. The corpse had been saved by some boatmen using grappling hooks. The

holy man orders one of his companions to swim out and bring back a coble (raft or boat) moored on the other side. Hearing and following the command, Lugne Mocumin suddenly removed his garments except for a loin cloth and jumped into the water. But the monster perceived the surface of the water was being disturbed by the swimmer and came up, moving toward him as he crossed the middle of the stream, and rushed up with a great roar and an open mouth.

"The holy man seeing it. . . commanded the ferocious monster by saying:

" 'Go thou no further nor touch the man – Go back at once!'

"Then, on hearing this word of the saint the monster was terrified and fled away more quickly than if it had been dragged by ropes, though it approached Lugne as he swam so closely that man and monster were no more than the length of one punt pole."

This enchanting passage was the first account of something strange and unusual swimming around in Loch Ness. Many researchers have viewed this first report with an uncomfortable feeling. They wonder how much credence should be given to an incident that occurred a hundred years before Adamnan wrote the biography. Could the commands from a saint prevent the monster from devouring Lugne Mocumin? The report is either true or false. Our attitude toward it will reflect our views on early Christian saints and the power of their faith. My opinion is that the passage is a fairly straightforward account, that the Irish saint did encounter the monster, and drove the beast away.

During the next several centuries the Loch Ness monster was not mentioned. This is possibly due to the isolation of the highlands of Scotland. Another

reason is that most history was repeated orally in those days. When the invention of printing allowed histories of the area to be published, we find that lake monsters are mentioned in the earliest editions. Hector Boece's *History of Scotland* (1527) tells of a monster terrorizing the highlands. Boece's passage reads:

". . . that out of Garloch, a loch of Argyle, came a terrible beast as big as a greyhound, puted like a gander and struck down great trees with the length of its tail; and slew three men quickly who were hunting, with three strokes of his tail; and were it not that the remnant of the hunters climbed up in strong oaks, they had all been slain in some way. After the slaughter of these men, it fled speedily to the loch. Sundry prudent men believed great trouble would follow in Scotland because of the appearance of this beast, for such had been seen before, and great trouble always followed soon after."

Another Scottish historian, Timothy Pont, wrote about another monster in 1590:

". . . In this little country there were certain inhabitants of certain parts of the Lochaber called Lochferia and Mamor foreagainst Ardgour, and they did build a house of timber in one little island which was against the mosses next to the principal town, which they had in Ardgour. And the said inhabitants having this island for a strength house to keep himself and the principal men of his kin and friends from their enemies. They dwelling there for a space, it fortuned on a time a monstrous being in the island, it was overwhelmed by that terrible and most powerful monstrous beast and so they all perished and were devoured."

The Chronicles of Fortingale (1570) tells of another monster that had been seen. "There was ane monstrous fish seen in Lochfyne," the book states,

"having a great een in the head thereof, and at times would stand above the water as high as the mast of a ship; and the said had upon the head thereof two croons. . ."

Boswell and Dr. Johnson made a trip to the highlands in 1773 and Boswell heard an account of a monster allegedly inhabiting the waters of Loch na Mna. He wrote:

". . . (Our Guide) said there was a wild beast in it, a sea-horse which came and devoured a man's daughter; upon which the man lighted a great fire, and had a cow roasted on it, the smell of which attracted the monster. In the fire was put a spit. The man lay concealed behind a loose wall of stones, which extended from the fire over the summit of the hill, till it reached the side of the loch. The monster came, and the man with the red hot spit destroyed it. Malcolm showed me the little hiding place, and the row of stones. He did not laugh when he told me the story."

The first newspaper to mention the loch monsters was the *London Times* in the issue of March 6, 1856. Headlined *"The Sea Serpent in the Highlands,"* it read:

"The village of Leurbost, Parish of Lochs, Lewis, is at present the scene of an unusual occurrence. This is no less than the appearance in one of the inland fresh-water lakes of an animal which from its great size and dimensions has not a little puzzled our island naturalists. Some suppose him to be a description of the hitherto mythical water-kelpie; while others refer it to the minute descriptions of the 'sea serpent,' which are revived from time to time in the newspaper columns. It has been repeatedly seen within the last fortnight by crowds of people, many of whom have come from the remotest part of the parish to witness the uncommon spectacle. The

animal is described as being in appearance and siz
like 'a large peat sack,' while others affirm that
'six-oared boat' could pass between the huge fin
which are occasionally visible. All, however, agree i
describing its form as that of an eel; and we hav
heard one, whose evidence we can rely upon, stat
that in length he supposed it to be about 40 feet. It
probable that it is no more than a conger eel after al
animals of this description having been caught i
Highland lakes which have attained huge size. He
currently reported to have swallowed a blanke
inadvertently left on the bank by a girl herdin
cattle. A sportsman ensconced himself with a rifle i
the vicinity of the loch during a whole day, hoping t
get a shot, but he did no execution."

The kelpie mentioned in the *Times'* article is
popular Scottish name for some sort of lake monste
Poet James Hogg mentioned in *The Queen's Wake* i
1813 that a darksome pool "was now no more th
kelpie's home." Another Scottish author, Sir Walte
Scott, was intrigued by the Scottish legends con
cerning "water cows" or "lake horses." Like man
other of his countrymen, Scott took long walk
along the lochs. He always carried a rifle with him
possibly hoping to zero in on one of the creatures

As early as 1810, Sir Walter Scott was intrigue
by the reports of things in Scottish lakes. Writing to
friend that year, he commented:

". . . If I could for a moment credit the universa
tradition respecting almost every Scotch loch, high
land or lowland, I would positively state that thei
water-cow, always supposed to dwell there, was th
hippopotamus.

"Nor would I be at all surprised, considering th
uniformity of the tradition both as to the nature an
appearance of the animal, if upon their drawing som
of these lochs, which the rage for improvement wil

one day bring about, we should come upon the
skeleton of this Egyptian behemoth."

Several years later, Scott was still interested in
water monsters. He recorded that a monster said to
inhabit Cauldshields Loch near his home had been
seen by several people He wrote: ". . . If it were not
that an otter swimming seems like a very large creature,
I would hardly know what to think of it, for a very
cool-headed, sensible man told me he had seen it in
broad daylight – he scouted my idea of an otter and
said the animal was more like a cow or a horse."

Scott also told in his *Journal* of a group of Scottish
men who set out to capture the "water-cow" in a
lake near their homes. Determined to capture the
creature, they set out bait one night. The group
remained nearby in a hidden position, waiting for the
animal to raise to the bait. Their vigil was not re-
warded. When the dawning sun penetrated the foggy
mist over the lake, their bait floated untouched on
the water.

In his *Memoirs of An Ex-Minister,* Lord Malmesbury
of England published his account of Victorian politics.
The book, published in 1882, contains a sighting of
another loch creature observed in 1857. He wrote:

"October 3rd – This morning my stalker and his
boy gave me an account of a mysterious creature,
which they say exists in Loch Arkaig, and which they
call the lake-horse. It is the same animal of which one
has occasionally read accounts in the newspapers of
having been seen in the Highland lochs, and on the
existence of which in Loch Assynt the late Lord
Ellesmere wrote an interesting article, but hitherto
the story has always been looked upon as fabulous.
I am now, however, persuaded of its truth. My
stalker, John Stuart at Achnacarry, has seen it twice,
and both times at sunrise in summer on a bright
sunny day, when there was not a ripple on the water.

The creature was basking on the surface; he saw only the head and the hindquarters, proving its back was hollow, which is not the shape of any fish or seal. Its head resembled that of a horse. It was also seen once by his three little children, who were walking together along the beach. It was then motionless, about thirty yards from shore, and apparently asleep, and at first they took it for a rock, but when they got near it moved its head, and they were so frightened that they ran home, arriving in a state of greatest terror. There was no mistaking their manner when they related this story, and they offered to make an affidavit before a magistrate. The Highlanders are very superstitious about this creature. They are convinced there is never more than one in existence at the same time, and I believe they think it has something diabolical in its nature, for when I said I wished I could get a shot of it, my stalker observed very gravely, 'Perhaps your Lordship's gun would misfire.' It would be quite possible, but very difficult, for a seal to work its way up the river Lochy into Loch Arkaig."

One reason for the Scots believing the creatures might have a "diabolical nature" was reported by Antoon Cornelius Oudemans, author of *The Great Sea Serpent* (Leyden; London, 1892). After a "flap" of sightings of the creature in Loch Ness in 1933-34, Oudemans published an account of a large pool in the River Garry in Scotland. This pool is located near the spot where the river empties into Loch Oich. Oudemans stated:

"Tradition has it that many years ago some children residing at Inchlaggan were playing on the loops of the Garry at this spot when a 'huge beastie' in the shape of a deformed pony appeared on the bank of the river. Curious to learn whether the creature was not a real pony on which they could enjoy a ride, the children went up to it and, as the story goes,

they found the 'beastie' so docile that one of them ventured on its back. No sooner had the child done so, than the 'beastie' plunged into the pool with the child clinging to its mane. No trace was ever found of the body thus mysteriously drowned." Interestingly, Loch Oich and Loch Ness are connected by a river. It is conceivable that the creatures used the river to move between the two lochs.

Father Allan McDonald was the type of person who found adventure wherever he went. When he was appointed parish priest on the small island of South Uist, he used his spare hours to compile a journal of folk tales in the isolated region. On June 5, 1897, Father McDonald was visiting the home of Ewen MacMillan when the priest's host decided to relate a tale of seeing one of the Unbelievables in the lochs.

"I was out hunting for a stray horse one nice summer day about four years ago," MacMillan told the priest. "I wasn't having much luck because there was a heavy fog hanging over the island. But I kept at it because the horse could get injured wandering around in the fog. I was coming up to Loch Duvat near Eriskay when I saw an animal directly ahead of me. He was on the north side of the lake."

Father McDonald asked, "Was this your horse?"

"At first I thought it was," admitted MacMillan. "Thinking it was my mare, I walked through the fog and came within twenty yards of it. Just as I neared it, I realized it was a water-horse."

"What was the size?" asked the priest.

Ewen MacMillan reflected for a moment. "Larger than an Eriskay pony," he answered. "I had just a brief glimpse of the creature before I heard it scream. The thing gave off the most frightening scream I'll ever hear. It was something unreal. I was scared and I turned and immediately ran as fast as I could in the

opposite direction. My horses that were grazing on the west side of the lake were terrified by the scream. I could hear them running as I rushed home. I didn't stop until I got home and my horses were in their stalls, their eyes bulging with fright."

"Did you get close enough to see the color of the beast?"

MacMillan shook his head. "There was too much fog."

"What did the scream sound like?" asked the priest.

"The devil's angry cry," replied MacMillan. "It was the most hideous sound I've ever heard."

Father McDonald lit his pipe and reflected on the many books he had read on the occult. He ventured an opinion that the water-horse was not a living creature, but a spirit form.

MacMillan disagreed. "It was the beastie that lives in the lochs."

"I've heard those stories," said Father McDonald. "Yet, no one has tried to catch the beast."

"The devil looks after his own," said MacMillan. "People have tried to capture the things, but their efforts are hampered by bad luck."

Ewen MacMillan may have been referring to the early efforts to capture one of the monsters in the lochs. The first serious campaign took place on Loch Beiste in Western Ross. Around 1860, an Englishman named Arthur Banks purchased a large country estate on Greenstone Point. The boundaries of his farm surrounded Loch Beiste, where local residents claimed a water-horse lived.

A stout man with thick shoulders and an ample belly, Banks liked to stroll around his estate in the role of a country gentleman. The actual work on the farm was done by a staff of local farmhands. During a walk around the farm one warm spring morning, Banks discovered his farmhands had not plowed the

land near the loch.

Banks called his overseer, a sturdy Scotsman named Angus McWayne.

"The hands haven't plowed down by the loch," said Banks indignantly.

"They're afraid of the beastie," said Angus McWayne.

"The what?" asked Banks in an incredulous tone.

"The beastie," replied the overseer. "The water-horse that lives in the loch."

Arthur Banks frowned. "What are you talking about, man?"

Angus McWayne explained that the farmhands refused to till the land lying close to the water. A gigantic monster known locally as the water-horse became angry when people ventured close to the edge. The gigantic creature had chased a young farmhand a couple of summers ago. The man barely escaped from the creature's angry onslaught.

History doesn't tell whether Arthur Banks convinced his farmhands to farm the land by the loch. We do know that the Englishman became obsessed with capturing the elusive aquatic monster. He called his workers together during the summer and announced plans to drain the lake. "In that way we can expose the damned thing," said the farm owner.

"And then?" asked Angus McWayne.

"We capture the thing alive."

Angus McWayne and the farmhands shifted restlessly. McWayne spoke for the group. "My lord," he said, "just who is to take the beastie alive?"

Arthur Banks recognized the fear glimmering in his worker's eyes. "I'll do it if need be," he snapped. "And if any of you are frightened of draining the loch, I'll keep a man close by with a rifle to guard you."

Arthur Banks planned to capture the creature, then

exhibit the monster in London in a side show. "A man could make a fortune with a living monster," he told his banker.

Although he drove his workers relentlessly, Banks' scheme to drain the loch proved futile. After several weeks of digging, it became apparent that the loch was fed by an underground spring. As the work dragged on, Banks screamed at his workers, quarreled with his wife, and cursed the elusive water-horse. Standing by the loch one morning, Banks was seized by the idea of exhibiting a dead monster.

Visions of wealth dancing in his mind, Banks rushed to where Angus McWayne and the farmhands were digging another trench.

"Forget that," Banks told his workers. "I want you to get into town and order as much poison as you can get. We'll poison the water and the thing will die!"

During the next two weeks, several wagonloads of quick lime and other poisonous substances were poured into the lake. An enormous amount of fish were killed, but the water-horse failed to float to the surface.

Recognizing his quest was doomed, Arthur Banks turned his wrath on his workers.

"You lied to me!" he shouted. "I've spent my time and money trying to capture an animal that doesn't exist. I'm fining every man on the farm for this impertinent lie. A pound each so that you'll never lie to me again."

In *Wanderings in the Western Highlands and Islands*, author Mary Donaldson told of an effort to drag a loch on the island of Skye for a lake monster believed to live there. Everyone came from miles around to witness the monster's demise, but the grappling hooks failed to snare the creature.

Skye is the location of a sighting that took place on Loch Alsh in September, 1893. Dr. Farquhar

Matheson and his wife were sailing in a small boat on the loch. The weather was pleasant, a bright sun having dispelled a morning fog. Visibility was excellent when Dr. Matheson saw something rise up in the loch in front of their boat. Writing in *Strand* magazine's issue of September, 1895, he said:

". . . It had a long, straight neck that was as tall as my mast. . . It was then about two hundred yards away and moving towards us.

"Then it began to draw its neck down, and I saw clearly that it was a large sea-monster – of the saurian type, I should think. It was brown in colour, shining, and with a sort of ruffle at the junction of its head and neck. . . It moved its head from side to side, and I saw the reflection of the light from its wet skin."

Dr. Matheson observed the creature for about two minutes, then it slipped beneath the surface. However, it popped up three more times for two- or three-minute intervals.

"When it appeared the second time," wrote Dr. Matheson, "it was going away from us and was travelling at a great speed. . . I was interested and followed it. From its first to its last appearance we travelled a mile, and the last time we saw it it was about a mile away.

"I saw no body – only a ripple of water where the line of the body should be. I should judge, however, that there must have been a large base of water to support such a neck. It was. . . of the nature of a gigantic lizard, I should think. An eel could not lift up its body like that. . . ."

What might be termed a fisherman's nightmare took place on Loch Morar on the night of August 16, 1969. William Simpson and Duncan McDonnell were in a motor boat on the western side of the loch. Around nine o'clock, Simpson went below and put a kettle of water on the stove to prepare tea. McDonnell

remained at the wheel of the boat.

Suddenly, McDonnell heard a strange noise behin his craft. A large object was moving toward the boa as Simpson came on deck. Both men judged th object was about twenty feet away from their boa when first sighted. The object hit the boat with soli force. Simpson heard the tea kettle crash to the dec below. He hurried down to turn off the gas.

On deck, McDonnell was busy fighting off th monster.

He grabbed an oar and tried to shove the monste away from the boat. Pushing fiercely against the hug body, McDonnell was shocked when the oar broke

"Bring the gun," McDonnell yelled to his partner.

In the cabin, Simpson grabbed a rifle and came charging on deck. He fired point-blank at the creature, which fell away from the boat and sank into the lake. Nerves taut, the two men pulled away from that part of the lake as rapidly as possible.

Newspapers around the world carried the story with wild headlines. Reporters rushed to Loch Morar to interview the two men.

"What did the thing look like?" asked a reporter.

"It was about twenty to thirty feet long," Simpson recalled. "The skin was rough in appearance. It was sort of a dirty brown color."

"I was fighting off the thing on deck and the head was snakelike in appearance," added McDonnell. "The head was about twelve inches in width at the top."

The two men said there were three small humps atop the monster's body. They also felt the animal had not attacked their boat, but had accidentally bumped them as it moved across the loch. "I've seen the thing a couple of times before this," said McDonnell. "I do a lot of fishing on the lake. I saw the head and neck the first time. Later, I was fishing

at another spot and saw the humps moving through the water."

Reporters informed their readers that Loch Morar visitors have been sighting the monster for several decades. There is even a local legend that the monster appears only before the death of a McDonnell. The three humps are said to represent the coffin, grave and death of another McDonnell. "You can't put much credence in that sort of thing," said John McDonnell after he was asked about the tradition.

One of the first recorded sightings of the monster in Loch Morar took place in 1895. Sir Theodore Brinckman and his wife were vacationing in the area. They hired a guide to take them out on the loch in his boat. Mrs. Brinckman was riding in the bow of the boat when she saw an object that looked like an overturned boat.

Mrs. Brinckman pointed toward the object. "Someone's had trouble," she said.

"No, that's just the monster," explained their guide.

While the Brinckmans watched the dark shape move across the surface, the guide explained that the monster was seen infrequently. "But everyone knows he's down there," the guide continued. "I see him from my boat a few times each year."

Descriptions of the Loch Morar creatures indicate it is brownish or dark gray in color, has a long neck and humps above the body. In the last twenty-five years the animal has been seen by both local residents and tourists. Alexander McDonnell and a group of children glimpsed the creature sunning itself on shore in 1946. Two years later a group of tourists sighted the traditional humps moving across the lake. In 1958 a visiting doctor and his family obtained a brief view of the beast. Ten years later a local man saw the creature paddling in the loch, its snakelike

head tapering off to a neck that stood some six or eight feet out of the water.

Some people suggested that the creatures being sighted in Scottish waters are otters. Eyewitnesses dispute this theory, claiming the monster is larger, more reptilian and snakelike in appearance.

"A lot more exploring needs to be done in these lakes," said John Clark, an American who has spent two years in Scotland checking reports on the creatures. "One story that intrigued me is that Loch Ness, and several other lochs, has underwater caverns that are immense in size. What we may have is the traditional sea serpent that's been reported throughout history. They may have been locked in these waters back in the past. Or the creatures may use the lochs as a breeding spot. If there are caverns in Loch Ness, we may find that all of these lochs are connected by some underground river. There could be families of the things moving freely between the various lochs. Or all of these reports may be around one or two of the animals moving from spot to spot through some subterranean passageway."

Chapter III

MODERN MONSTER-HUNTERS, RUMORS AND REPORTS

It all started in the nineteen thirties. Loch Ness had been a quiet body of water for centuries, its shores only occasionally disturbed by tourists. Then, a series of monster sightings created a sensation for newspaper readers around the world. Newsmen, monster hunters and an army of plain, ordinary curious people came rushing into the region. Since then, the legend of Nessie, the Loch Ness monster, has become a fifty-year-old saga of frustration and adventure.

Admittedly, there were a vast number of skeptics who sniffed at lake monsters. They pointed out that such creatures were nothing more than a modern version of ancient sea tales about sea serpents. A lake monster was impossible. It was all a matter of bad reporting, untrained observers and mistakes. There was also a darker theory that the storekeepers, hotel owners and taxi drivers around the loch were hunting for extra tourist business.

"What better way to attract crowds to this dreary place than to knit together a fantastic tale about a

monster living in their loch?" asked a newspa columnist in 1938. "Such a fairytale provide steady supply of demented but hopeful people w want to observe the monster."

More than one skeptic questioned the Scotsma sobriety. "They have been making whiskey in th since the beginning of time," wrote an English rea to the *London Times*. "Perhaps they have b drinking a bit too much of their home produc liquid."

Skeptics aside, the modern saga of the Loch N monster started in 1933 when the *Inverness Cour* ran an article in the May 2 edition about a sighti The article was written by the paper's correspond at Ft. Augustus, a Mr. Alex Campbell.

Campbell prefaced his report on the 1933 sighti by mentioning that generations of Scotsmen believ a "fearsome-looking monster" dwelled in the dep of Loch Ness. The lake monster was usually thoug to be a myth.

"Now, however, comes the news that the beast h been seen once more, for on Friday of last week, well-known businessman and his wife were motori along the northern side of the loch," wrote Campbe ". . . They were startled to see a tremendous upheav on the loch. . . . The creature disported itself for ful a mintue, its body resembling that of a whale, and t water cascading and churning like a simmerin cauldron. . . . Both on-lookers confessed that the was something uncanny about the whole thing, f they realized this was no ordinary denizen of t deep."

The two sighters were Mr. and Mrs. John Macka owners of the Drumnadrochit Hotel. Wishing to avo the stigma of publicity for their hotel, the Macka had wisely asked to remain anonymous in the pre account. The couple were driving from Inverness t

village of Drumnadrochit along the new highway ilt by the lake. Mrs. Mackay was the first to see the mmotion in the water. At that time, about 3 P.M. the afternoon of April 14, 1933, the surface of loch was tranquil and calm. The sun was shining htly and only a few clouds marred the sky.

"At first, I thought the turbulance was caused by a uple of ducks fighting in the water," Mrs. Mackay id later. "On reflection, it appeared too large to be used by a couple of ducks."

When the commotion subsided, a large wake became ible on the surface of the lake. The wake moved ward the middle of the loch, about a mile wide at at point. When the wake reached the middle of the h, two huge black humps suddenly rose out of the ater.

"The rear hump appeared first," Mrs Mackay ported. "I took this to be part of a whale because the blue-black color. I've often seen whales during voyages and am familiar with their appearance. hen, the second hump rose out of the water and hey moved with a forward rolling motion. They emained smooth in their outline and did not show ny traces of fins or other protrusions. They also ose and sank in an undulating manner, yet they ever went entirely out of our sight. I would estimate hat the length of the two humps was about twenty eet."

When the humps neared a pier on the opposite hore, they turned abruptly and sank beneath the rface with a large turbulent motion of the water.

"I was driving the car," admitted Mr. Mackay. "I topped just in time to see the final turbulance. I did notice a large wave come rolling toward the shore fter the humps had submerged."

Loch Ness was the perfect spot for a monster. A trange, isolated lake about 24 miles long and a mile

wide, it is the largest land-locked body of water in t British Isles. The wild, macabre terrain around t lake creates the perfect setting for monster repor The ruins of Urquhart Castle create a bizarre table on the northern end. An errie section of the lak between Glen Urgqhart and the village of Foyers, an isolated spot that the monster seems to favor.

Near the village of Foyers is a long, bizarre buildi known locally as Boleskine. It was this building, a this dark and lonely land, that attracted the Engli occultist Aleister Crowley to perform some of h demonic magick rituals along the shores of the lak The old magician – some say drug fiend and madma – moved to Boleskine shortly after 1900. In the er darkness of the loch shore, Crowley attempted invoke demonic entities to do his biding.

"It was an atmosphere well suited for demon influences," said Crowley later, after he had le Scotland. "There was a tangible evidence of menac and forboding about the loch. Even on the brighte day, a tangible darkness seemed to fall over the hous and grounds like a thick, evil shroud."

After the publication of Campbell's article on th Mackay sighting, the story was picked up by large newspapers in Glasgow and London. Wire service rushed the story to newspapers throughout the world It was the type of story suitable to the times. world-wide depression had thrown the world int a dark, economic tailspin. Breadlines had forme throughout the western world. Hitler and his black shirted fascist followers were rising to power i Germany, determined to impose a teutonic brutalit on the world for a thousand years. Depressed, fru trated, and fearful of the future, people looked outsid themselves for diversion.

A monster story from an unknown lake in Scotlan was a perfect story to keep the world's collectiv

inds off the many frustrating problems!

When the first newsmen arrived in the towns and illages around Loch Ness, they learned that other eople had seen the monster. Early rumors about mething large and unusual in the lake were tracked own. Some of the reports were attested to by spectable citizens in the region.

"In the summer of 1885 a number of stories irculated about a strange beast being seen by many eople about Loch Ness," reported D. Murray Rose *The Scotsman* (20.x.33). "It usually only appeared or a few minutes on the surface of the Loch, so that no one could properly identify it."

The *Northern Chronicle* at Inverness added another ghting:

". . . It appears that some forty-four years ago an briachan mason, Alexander Macdonald, often saw a range creature disporting itself on the loch in the rly hours of the morning.

"Mr. Macdonald, who was a regular traveler on the och Ness mail steamer between Abriachan and verness, was often known to arrive at Abriachen Pier a state of subdued excitement, and after having oarded the steamer he sometimes volunteered the formation that he had seen the 'salamander' as he alled it.

". . . It should be added that Mr. Macdonald died good many years ago." (edition of 12.viii.33).

The *Glasgow Herald* (19.xii.33) reported another tory from the same time:

". . . Mr. Roderick Matheson was part owner. . . of he schooner *Bessie*, which frequently made passages om the West Coast to the East via the Caledonian anal and, of course, Loch Ness. On one of these urneys Mr. Matheson saw in Loch Ness what he escribed as 'the biggest eel I ever saw in my life.'

" 'It had,' he said, 'a neck like a horse, and a mane

somewhat similar.' "

While these older stories added fuel to the lege of the monster, they did not constitute prop evidence. Another group of sightings had taken pla much later and newsmen and authors zeroed in these reports. William Miller and James McGillivr told of seeing the creature off Abriachan pier on clear, sunny day in May, 1923. The object looked li an "overturned boat" and they said it moved in circular pattern for eight to ten mintues. Anoth report came from this same spot in August, 192 Three women saw a humped object in the wat it remained motionless and stationary for some ten twelve minutes, then submerged with a loud splas

In July, 1930, Mr. Ian Milne was fishing off small boat in Dores Bay. Hearing a loud spla behind him, he turned and saw a large wave move in semi-circular pattern around his boat for about thr minutes. He caught a glimpse of three or four darki humps. The motion of the humps, according Milne, was like that of a caterpillar moving in undulating manner.

Milne's account was published in the August 2 1930, issue of the *Northern Chronicle*, Inverne However, his report failed to attract attention outsi the community. Another sighting was uncovered b reporters who interviewed James Cameron, a postma Cameron told the newsmen he was traveling on a bu along the loch when he saw a large, dark-colore object floating on the surface of the water.

"At first I thought the object was a boat that ha been upset," Cameron stated. "But on closer obse vation, I saw what appeared to be a hump. Th object was dark in color."

The next sighting, in chronological order, was th one mentioned by Mr. and Mrs. Mackay. Next cam an account from Alexander Shaw, who was standin

in front of his house overlooking the loch. He was accompanied by his son, Alister, when both men noticed a wave in the water. Suddenly, the monster's hump surfaced about three hundred yards off-shore.

"It was moving faster than a rowboat," said the elder Shaw. "We kept the object in sight for several minutes. Then a thunderstorm came up and we found our view of the water was obscured by the rain."

Several other sightings were reported during the next couple of months. Then, a sensational report came in from Mr. and Mrs. H.G. Spicer who were driving around the lake in their open Austin automobile. About 4 P.M. on a warm, sunny July 22, 1933, the couple rounded a small curve in the road when a bizarre creature popped into view. The monster moved across their path, crossing the highway, with a series of spastic motions. "When it crossed the road, its length covered the entire width of the highway," said Mrs. Spicer.

"It was in sight for just a few seconds," added her husband. "I definitely didn't see a head. There was just not enough time to get everything into proper focus. The thing I and my wife saw was of a loathsome gray color, something between the appearance of a dirty elephant or a rhinoceros. I saw a thin, long neck that moved up and down in a sort of half circular movement. The body was a great deal larger than the neck. However, I did not see any evidence of legs, tail or any other means of locomotion. The whole impression was that this was a large snail with a very long neck."

The road where the sighting was made is quite close to the loch. It was about twelve feet wide at that spot, according to reporters. Neither of the couple heard a splash after the animal vanished. "But the car was making a lot of noise," Spicer indicated. "We might not have heard it. We had not heard of

any monster until after we mentioned the experien to another traveler."

Twelve sightings were made in August, 1933; th were primarily reports of humped objects floati on the surface of the lake. We might suspect th some of these were mistakes. Everyone around th loch was infected with monster fever. A floating lo a line of black ducks or geese, and the suggestibl viewer was likely to conclude he'd spotted th monster.

Additional humped reports came in September an then a remarkable report came from four women wh were taking their late morning tea on the balcony o the Half-Way House tea room at Altsigh, another loc village.

"The conditions for observing the loch wer excellent," reported Mrs. Jane Frazer. "We wer having tea when, about 1,000 yards away, a head an neck rose up from the surface of the loch. Th general appearance was that of some mythical creatur The head was slightly dished like that of a terrier and at the place where the head and neck meets, ther was a frill like a couple of kippered herring. I als noticed a rather large, glittering eye on the hea where you might expect an eye to be. We observe the creature for perhaps ten mintues. From time t time, the head moved to and fro from side to side."

Mrs. Mary Howden also spotted two humps behin the head, plus something in the rear that coul possibly have been a tail. "The color was dark," sh said.

Mrs. G. Frazer stated she noticed the head, neck humps and everything except a possible tail. "I saw a splashing of water and then noticed the head rise up slowly out of the lake," Mrs. Frazer explained. "It stayed in view for perhaps two minutes and then sank beneath the surface. Then the head and neck

reappeared, with the humps behind it, and at a higher position in the water. This time the head turned slowly from side to side as if the monster was taking in a broad view of the lake. There was a small vessel passing on the far side of the lake. This did not appear to disturb the creature. It moved away down the loch and then finally sank out of sight."

Mrs. W. E. Hobbs said she noticed two shining eyes separated by a dark perpendicular line. "I thought at first that this was a steamboat with the lights on," she reported. "A friend and I left the balcony and drove my car for a short distance down the loch. We hoped to obtain a clearer view of whatever it might have been. When we parked and looked over the loch again, the object was gone."

There were many other sightings made during the remaining months of 1933. Most were reports of the traditional, humped object floating across the surface of the water. During these sightings, the weather was usually sunny. The loch was calm and tranquil. On October 1, 1933, B.A. Russell of Ft. Augustus was walking along the lake shore near his home when he caught sight of the monster's head and neck above the water. At a distance of an estimated 800 yards, Russel obtained a silhouette of the monster swimming past him. He told newsmen the creature's head was scarcely larger than the neck, that color was dark but indistinguishable. He also saw no protruding features, although appendages might not be visible at such a distance.

"I had to make my observations with my naked eye," said Russell. "I wanted to run and grab my binoculars for a better look. But I was afraid that if I gave up the watch, the animal would be gone when I returned. Surprisingly, the object stayed in view for about twelve mintues. I'd heard reports about the animal in the loch and assumed it was a large seal.

I never expected to see anything like this."

Once again, there was a rash of "humped" sightings. Then, another good view of the animal was obtained on December 27, 1933, when Mr. George Jamison was driving along the highway and obtained a side view of the monster swimming along the loch. A head, neck and two connected humps were visible. They were reported as being gray colored with mottled spots of black. The skin seemed to be knobby or rough in texture.

Jamison indicated the largest hump rode about a yard out of the water. The smaller one was about 24 inches above the loch's surface. Overall length of his sighting was from fifteen to twenty feet. "But from the disturbance of the water," said Jamison, "I feel there was considerable bulk and length below the surface."

After watching the creature, Jamison beeped his horn. The animal turned, saw his vehicle and immediately dropped its head and body beneath the waves.

By the early days of 1934, the Loch Ness monster was a world-wide sensation. Scientists were debating the possibility that a prehistoric creature existed in the lake. Several gave their opinion that a plesiosaur had probably spanned millions of years, living until the present era. A couple of still photographs had been made. Retouched and slightly fuzzy, they were printed in newspapers around the world.

Then, a couple of hoaxters drove away the serious scientific researchers. The dim-witted trick took place when the *London Daily Mail* sponsored an expedition to film the monster. Although local residents around the loch seldom found tracks of the creature on shore, the *Daily Mail's* hunters and filmakers planted a few fake footprints.

"It is a four-fingered beast with pads or feet about eight inches across." said the two hoaxters, Weatherall

and Pauli. "We should judge the creature to be a very powerful soft-footed animal about twenty feet long. The spoor clearly shows the undulations of the pads and the outlines of claws or nails."

The pair's cast of the spoor was brought to the Natural History department of the British Museum on New Year's Day, 1934. Four days later, the experts delivered their verdict. "We are not able to find any significent difference between the impressions and those made by a foot of a hippopotamus. The closest agreement is with the right hind foot, particularly of a mounted specimen that is not fully grown."

In other words, the museum was suggesting that a mounted hippo foot had been used to make the tracks along the lake shore. Still later, reports in London said a mounted hippo foot, used as either an ash tray or an umbrella stand, had been used by the hoaxers.

Red-faced and embarrassed, the *Daily Mail* decided there was nothing to the monster. For quite some time, the *Daily Mail* simply forgot the monster. When they did start printing new reports, they discredited witnesses to a degree by subtle use of headlines. Today, of course, the newspaper has recovered from the embarrassing incident and has done excellent reportage on the creature.

A day after the museum report discredited the hoaxers, a classic sighting was made by a young medical student. Arthur Grant was riding a motorcycle toward his parent's home in Drumnadrochit about 1:30 A.M. on the early morning of January 5, 1934. It was a bright, moon-lit night. There had been some overcast, but as Grant came down into Abriachan, he saw a dark object illuminated by moonlight on the side of the road. Slowing down, Grant was shocked to see a dark, hulking object leap out in front of his cycle. The hulk jumped across the road in

two leaps, then disappeared into the foliage along the lakeshore.

"I had a good view of the object," said Grant. "In fact, I almost hit it with my motorcycle. It had a long neck and large oval-shaped eyes at the top of a small head. The tail was probably five or six feet long and would probably be very powerful. The curious thing about the tail was that the end was rounded off. It did not come to a point. The total length of the animal would be fifteen to twenty feet. Knowing something of natural history I can say that I have never seen anything in my life like the animal I saw. It looked like a hybrid – a cross between a plesiosaur and a member of the seal family."

Arthur Grant braked his cycle to a halt. He jumped off the machine and rushed into the brush after the creature. Ahead, he heard a large splash as if the monster had jumped into the lake. After marking the spot where the monster crossed the road, Grant went home and told his family about the experience. He also drew a sketch of what he'd seen.

"There was a head rather like a snake or an eel," he told newsmen later. "It was flat on top, with a large oval eye, longish neck and somewhat longer tail. The body was much thicker towards the tail than the front portion. In color it was black or dark brown and had a skin rather like a whale. The head must have been about six feet from the ground as it crossed the road, the neck three and a half or four feet long, the tail about five or six feet long. Height from belly to back would be five feet. Overall length was about eighteen to twenty feet."

After Grant's sighting, the monster appeared to go into decline. Of course, there was an occasional sighting to keep the legend alive. Several excellent but grainy photographs of the creature were obtained. As the newsmen continued to give the creature plenty of

news play, Nessie became the most famous resident of Scotland.

World War II arrived and people forgot about monsters. There were enough of the two-legged variety around to forget those of a legendary nature. There was an occasional scientific discussion about the monster. But, for the most part, scientists were tight-lipped and close minded about the creature.

From time to time, another report came from the loch about a tourist or local resident seeing the creature. On a slow news day, editors sometimes dusted off their Loch Ness files and asked a cub reporter for a rehash on the monster. Magazines occasionally printed a few stories, often illustrated by some garish artist's depictation of a huge serpent-like creature.

By the nineteen sixties, science had progressed to where a serious search could be made for Nessie. We had light, fast boats available equipped with radar, sonar and other sophisticated electronic equipment. Photography was no longer an alchemist's art; fast film, electronic flash guns and underwater cameras were low-cost, easy to operate, and available to anyone.

It was then that the monster hunters took a long, hard took at the eye-witness reports and started an earnest search for the Loch Ness monster. Until now, that quest has been a difficult experience for many hunters. Yet, like all men seized by a vision of the unknown, they remain on the shores of this lonely lake waiting for that perfect picture, that moment when Nessie will become a reality for the world.

Chapter IV

THE VIGIL OF THE LOCH NESS PHENOMENA INVESTIGATION BUREAU

"I saw a big commotion in the water, then a thing like a rather thick periscope appeared and moved along from right to left, accompanied by a great disturbance about the 'periscope' and behind it."

This was the statement given by a respected attorney from Inverness, Scotland, after his sighting of the monster during a visit to Loch Ness. R.R. MacEwen knew there were no submarines operating in the loch. The periscope must therefore have belonged to what may be a tribe of monsters living in the deep lake.

One person who advocates that a tribe of unknown monsters lives in Loch Ness is Clem Lister Skelton, the resident technician of the Loch Ness Phenomena Investigation Bureau, Ltd. Skelton claims to have seen "Nessie" more than any other person. This is because he has "looked at the darn loch probably more than anyone else." Skelton told Godfrey Anderson of the Associated Press wire service that "Nessie" was his personal Moby Dick.

"We have one of the largest creatures in the world

in the confines of this loch," Skelton reported. "We don't know what it is and it's challenging. It's exciting. And it's also infuriating."

Skelton's work with the bureau has been a long, exhausting and frustrating experience. His reward is knowing that consistent observation of the loch is maintained from May to October by the bureau. Until 1962 when the group was established, monster hunting was a haphazard affair. Among the founders and charter members were a prestigious group of people that included scientist Peter Scott and David James, then a member of Parliament. They were joined by Richard Fitter, a highly respected nature columnist for the London *Observer*. Another of the founding members of the bureau was Mrs. Constance Whyte, whose book *More Than a Legend* contained more than a hundred reports on the monster; the book was published in England in 1957. Mrs. Whyte's book presents a convincing theory that the monster is probably a throw-back to prehistoric ages, possibly a plesiosaur.

The Loch Ness Phenomena Bureau maintains an archives on the monster, tries to collect reports, and uses volunteers to watch the lake. Their files contain tapes, photographs, reports, negatives and other items on the monster. When the bureau was set up, David James reported the group claimed no right to the unknown creature. "If any individual or group wants to pursue an independent line of research, all of the information at the bureau is at their disposal," he indicated. "The bureau is dedicated to identifying the unusual animal."

After the bureau was set up, an expedition was launched by H.G. Hasler. Sponsored by the London *Observer*, Hasler sailed his *Jester* onto the lake. The craft was manned by several enthusiastic young men who volunteered to make a series of sweeps by sail

around the loch.

"We're operating on the theory that the animal may come up to a sailing craft rather than an engine powered boat," one of the young men told a newsman. "When Thor Heyerdhal was on the *Kon Tiki* voyage, he saw unusual animals that have never been known to approach a motor-driven ship. With sails, we may be able to slip up on the creature when it isn't aware of our presence."

With its sails rigged out like a Chinese junk, the *Jester* glided silently over the loch. The craft was also equipped with sophisticated and highly sensitive underwater microphones to any unusual sounds beneath the surface. During the next month, the crew was disappointed to find nothing that looked like a monster. Their microphones did pick up some unusual, tapping sounds in the water. However, on June 28, a crewman saw a series of hump-like protrusions rising above the surface of the lake. Alerting his companions, they also saw a commotion in the water near the boat. Interestingly enough, the tapping sounds came in strong on the microphones at that time. Several other sightings were reported by other crew members later that same day.

Reporting on this activity, Hasler wrote in the *Observer* issue of August 19, 1962, that the activity "would suggest the presence of a large animal swimming or floating lazily just below the surface, and the small black humps were the extreme upper parts of it."

After Hasler's expedition left the lake, a group of hunters from a university used motorboats to check out the lake. After nearly 500 hours of electronic sweeping, they reported three unexplained pick-ups on their equipment. Led by Peter Baker and Mark Westwood, the Cambridge expedition did see a "pole-like" object, a dark hump, and eddies before they ended their 1962 search.

In their report, they concluded that "During the whole . . . 480 hour vigil, phenomena which might be mistaken for monsters were observed on 16 occasions. Eight of them were wake effects; six were caused by birds, one was an otter and one almost certainly a large salmon. No large fast-moving objects were seen, and only wake effects compared in size with the huge manifestations of the 1930's."

Yet, Baker and Westwood did not write off the monster's existence.

They concluded their report:

"We cannot say with conviction that the Loch Ness monster does not exist," they wrote. "Indeed, the small pieces of evidence we have all suggest that there is an unusual animal in the loch. However, we consider that the 'monster' may be much smaller than many people have claimed, and that the large humps are wave effects."

Another expedition was launched in October 1962, when bureau founder David James headed a group to check the lake at night. They theorized that the creature might rise to the surface only at night. With this in mind, they equipped their boats with powerful searchlights. The lights were beamed onto the lake's dark surface in an effort to attract the monster's attention. A tall, pole-like object was sighted one night riding six to eight feet out of the water. Another time, the nocturnal searchers saw a dome-like object cruising across the lake. This "dome" was later observed during daylight on two later days.

Writing in the *Observer,* David James told of the next sighting in that publication's edition for May 17, 1964. James reported:

". . . After a week we had to cannibalize one searchlight to keep the other one going and thus on the afternoon of October 19, 1962, we had not only three watchers on Temple Pier in Urquhart Bay, but

also five people engaged in searchlight repair.

"The afternoon was flat and calm and at first it was only the watcher who became aware of the sudden activity of the red salmon and sea-trout congregated in the Bay to catch the first spate up the rivers. Gradually, however, the mechanics downed tools and went to the end of the jetty as the aimless jumping of the fish turned into a concerted rout with everything 'scuttering' out into the middle of the loch.

"Eight of us saw a length of back six to eight feet in length break the surface about two hundred yards away and cruise slowly after the fish. We shot about fifty feet of film. Eye-witness statements were taken from all concerned that evening."

Still later, the movie film was inspected by the Joint Air Reconnaissance Center (JARIC). This military photographic group has worked closely with many investigators of Loch Ness phenomena. Their close scrutiny of the photographic evidence indicated there was something more than just a wave effect on the film. The object contained solidity. It was also dark in color and revealed a tendency to glisten in light.

The film and eye-witness accounts were presented to a panel of experts during a television broadcast on February 3, 1963. This prestigious group decided the evidence warranted additional scrutiny of the loch.

"We find there is some unidentified animate object in Loch Ness," said the panel's report. "If it is an animal, reptile or molluse of any known order, it is of such size as to be worthy of scientific examination and identification. If it is not of a known order, it is scientifically desirable to investigate it on thatground."

Encouraged by their first year's work at Loch Ness, the Bureau launched a search that has continued to this day.

More than any person, the modern quest for Nessie was triggered by Tim Dinsdale's interest in the

monster. Dinsdale, a careful researcher and a tireless investigator, hopes to eventually solve the enigma of the loch. When he had time available during the winter, 1959, Dinsdale read the existing books on the Loch Ness creature. He compiled the eye-witness reports into a statistical summary. From this work, Dinsdale felt that an image of the monster gradually emerged. It was a long-necker with a small head, a large humped body ending in a short tail. The statistics revealed the creature had four flippers.

Dinsdale felt this was a statistically accurate image of a plesiosaur. Convinced of his analysis, Dinsdale went to Loch Ness in early 1960. He borrowed a 16mm movie camera and maintained a vigil on the lake during daylight hours. Nothing that looked like a monster moved on the surface. Nessie was apparently hibernating in the depths of the deep lake. After a considerable interval, Dinsdale was prepared to give up his fruitless quest. His final day on the loch was April 23 and that's when he hit paydirt!

He obtained a few feet of what may become historic film!

Dinsdale was on a ride overlooking the loch, near Foyers, when he saw something moving in the water. His film reveals a single humped object moving directly across the loch. The hump crossed the water, then turned right and then left. It moved in a paralled motion along the far shore. Dinsdale took his film to a competent processor, then showed his evidence for the monster's existence on a television program. Millions of people witnessed the TV show; Dinsdale's film triggered renewed interest in searching for Nessie's identity. The full story of Dinsdale's research can be found in his three books on the phenomena, each carefully research and written. They are *The Loch Ness Monster,* published in England in 1961; *The Leviathans* (1966) and *Monster Hunt* (1972).

After the Dinsdale film was shown around the world, the Loch Ness Phenomena Bureau was established. This added scientific validity to monster hunting and research began at the lake. During the 1960's there were enough sightings to keep investigators interested, but the hunters discovered Nessie was an elusive creature. In 1966, the Joint Air Reconnaissance Center obtained Tim Dinsdale's film for inspection. Critics had claimed the "hump" on the film was nothing more than a motorboat. The JARIC report quickly dispelled this theory. Using the most sophisticated techniques of photographic analysis, JARIC said the Dinsdale film showed "a solid black, approximately triangular shaped object with NO impression of perspective. If the shape is assumed to be a plane triangle . . . it is a triangle with a base 5.5 ft. approx., and height 3.7 feet . . . A reasonable assumption would be that during the film sequence the object was traveling at or approaching 10 MPH."

JARIC decided the object was not a submarine. Neither was it a boat. "Which leaves the conclusion it is an animate object," The report declared. ". . . With some body. Even if the object is relatively flat bellied, the normal body 'rounding' in nature would suggest there is at least two feet under water from which it may be deduced that a cross section through the object would not be less than six feet wide and five feet high."

In 1965, Dr. Roy Mackal, a professor of Biochemistry at the University of Chicago, visited Scotland and Loch Ness. After his return to the United States, Dr. Mackal encouraged the Chicago Adventurer's Club to donate $5,000 and provide volunteers to identify the monster. At that time, Dr. Mackal believed the creature in the Scottish lake was possible a gigantic sea slug or boneless mollusc that could twist its body to look like a series of humps. Later,

Dr. Mackal was of the opinion that the monster was not an invertebrate. Dr. Mackal is now a director of the Loch Ness Phenomena Bureau, believing there is an unidentified creature in the lake. He feels the best "bet" is that Nessie is a large amphibian, an animal between mammal and a fish. Running a close second, in his opinion, is the possibility the Nessie is a giant eel or a plesiosaur, long-necked water reptile.

Mackal has staked his professional reputation on the existence of the Scottish monster. He informed "Talk" columnist Phillip Nobile recently that any scientist who checks out the "fringe" phenomena will have his professional competence questioned by critics. "But I feel no area of human experience should be taboo," said Mackal.

Mackal and his associates have narrowed their possible identification categories down after eliminating dolphins, sea cows and large seals. They compared the physical shape and the behavior of the creature in the loch against known species. As seals give birth to their young on land, it became clear that the Scottich creature did not give birth ashore. Underwater sonar tracking has shown that "Nessie" can change depth and direction rapidly; this is something that a fish cannot do. Therefore, Mackal and his colleagues concluded the monster was not a fish.

But, of course, there is no living amphibian living today that would fit Nessie's physical characteristics. "The animals in Loch Ness are about 25 feet in length," said Mackal. "They weight 2,500 pounds. It has a snake-like head, a back like an overturned boat and is marked shoulder to tail by an apparent dorsal fin."

Yet Dr. Mackal does not necessarily believe the Loch Ness Monster has to be of prehistoric origin. A giant eel would not have survived from the past. But if the creature is amphibian or a water reptile it

would be a throwback to prehistoric times.

Mackal bases his belief in the monster's existence on considerable evidence and these premises:

1. Lakes in other parts of the world reveal similar phenomena.

2. The coelacanth, a prehistoric fish believed to have become extinct 70-million years ago, was found near Madagasgar in 1939.

3. Loch Ness is a cul-de-sac with a large supply of salmon for food. As the "monster" or "monsters" are at the end of the food supply, they would not be bothered by enemies in the lake.

4. Reports of the monster are created when the creature surfaces to dine on salmon in the upper reaches of the lake. The creatures could also be air breathers, coming up for a few gasps of oxygen.

5. The food chain in Loch Ness can support about 300 large creatures. Up to ten animals have been tracked by sonar. The actual number of monsters in the lake would be somewhere between 10 and 300.

What happens if a monster is captured?

Mackal reported that the Loch Ness Phenomena Bureau has constructed several plastic traps in hopes of snaring one of the creatures. Made out of long tubes of polyvinyl chloride, the traps can be raised and lowered through the use of water and compressed air. If captured, the creature might be maintained in close surroundings for several months of study. However, neither Dr. Mackal or any other investigator has any illusions about the British government stepping in if a monster was trapped. It would take the British scientific establishment about two mintues to grab a captured creature and spirit it off to a secluded aquarium.

Interviewer Phillip Nobile asked Dr. Mackal about the possible killing or stuffing of a Loch Ness monster. Naturally, such action could only be taken by a

scientist if there was assurances that the creature was not from a limited group. Otherwise, a single death from a limited population might destroy a natural breeding balance.

Dr. Mackal echoed a concern that the stock in Loch Ness might be depleted if aquariums and museums throughout the world demanded specimens. "It would be best," he concluded, "to leave the monster in the lake, perhaps in a closed-off area."

Film, sonar soundings and eye-witness reports indicate conclusively that *something* – an unidentified creature – exists in Loch Ness. It is only a matter of time until clear still photos or movie film of the monster are obtained. The loch is now under constant watch. Although they endure a tiresome and often frustrating vigil, the monster hunters will stay at Loch Ness until positive proof is obtained. Only then will they be vindicated for their beliefs in the existence of Nessie.

While most hunting goes on at Loch Ness, there are other monster hunters prowling lakes throughout the world. A steady corpus of evidence – mostly eye-witness reports – is being compiled for the existence of long-necked lake monsters in many regions of our planet. Many of these reports are undoubtedly based on mistakes. Someone sees a floating tree, a half submerged log or an overturned rowboat and heads for the nearest newspaper office screaming "monster!"

Yet there is a large number of excellent reports by competent observers to show that the phenomena is real, world-wide and mind-boggling. With a small army of dedicated searchers, we will eventually obtain evidence that will satisfy even the most skeptical person. That evidence, either the physical specimen of the creature or a very clear photographic film, may be obtained tomorrow, next week or in another

few years. When it does arrive, we will have to revise many of our concepts about extinct species.

We may also find a bit of irony about monsters in the future.

Nessie and the Loch Ness group have been responsible for the current interest in the species. It would be ironical if evidence for the existence of such creatures came from another body of water, another lake in Scotland, Ireland, or even Russia.

Chapter V

SEARCH FOR SEA SERPENTS IN SCANDINAVIA

Students seldom fell asleep in the science classes taught by Dr. Peter Olsson at the state high school in Ostersund, Sweden. A zoologist, Dr. Olsson enlivened his classes with discussions of local phenomena. He was the author of a monograph on the plant life in Sweden and imparted his love of discovery to his students.

In 1898, a series of reports came to Dr. Olsson's attention about a strange serpentlike creature swimming in Lake Storsjo. As the town of Ostersund was located on the east edge of the lake, Dr. Olsson's students sought his opinion on the matter.

"I've done some studies in marine biology," admitted the teacher. "I can't relate these reports to any known animal."

"But my dad says they're real," said a student. "He says my grandfather used to talk about the leviathan that lived in the lake."

Dr. Olsson promised to check out the stories. "Maybe we've got a live sea serpent here," he said with an amused smile.

Olsson went down to the newspaper offices and began to check out their back files on monster sightings. He talked to the residents of Ostersund, asking their opinion on the creature. By October, the zoologist was able to present a fairly accurate sketch of the monster to his students, chalking the outline on the blackboard. Later, Dr. Olsson compiled his information into *Storsjoodjuret — Framsstallning af fakta och utredning* which was published at Ostersund in 1899. In a seventy-eight-year span starting in 1820 and extending to 1898, Dr. Olsson discovered twenty-three reports from people who had seen the lake creature.

The first report came from a farmer with a good reputation who was fishing on the lake in 1820. He complained that a "huge" animal had followed his craft for some time. This incident took place near the town of Furnas on the southern end of the lake. The monster lay dormant for thirteen years, then was glimpsed by a housepainter who claimed it was the "Lake Storsjo leviathan."

Dr. Olsson's next report came from the son of a man who obtained a good view of the creature. "My father often talked about it," said Harry Andersson. "He was Aron Andersson from Hackas and he was picnicking by the lake with several other people. Dad and some others had gone for a boat ride when they saw the leviathan leave the beach and swim out into the lake. The animal had apparently been sunning itself on the shore. The leviathan appeared to my father to be reddish gray in color. There was a white hairy mane that hung down on the back of the neck."

"Was your father frightened?" asked Olsson.

"The leviathan was at a distance," replied Harry Andersson. "He didn't become frightened — just astonished that the stories about the lake animal were true after all. He felt the animal was connected

in some way with the old Norse legends about sea serpents. He always wondered how a sea serpent came to be in our lake."

Around 1855, Paul Andersson reported he had seen the animal. Andersson was accompanied by four local men planning a fishing excursion for the day. They reported the creature was swimming in the same direction they were rowing, but their boat was quickly passed by the speedy leviathan. About three years later, another Ostersund resident said he was followed on the lake by a shape that resembled "an upturned boat."

The monster was seen twice during the summer of 1863. Jan Brumee and his family were crossing the lake when they heard a splashing sound coming from a nearby shore. Brumee's mother-in-law was a passenger in his boat.

"It sounds like those swimmers are having fun," said the elderly lady.

Coming closer, Brunee discovered the water was being disturbed by a huge marine animal with thick, relatively short feet or fins.

"We decided to try and catch the thing," Brumee told Dr. Olsson more than thirty years after the sighting. "There were some other men in another boat coming close behind us. We started after it, but the animal proved too swift for us. I can still remember how fast it moved through the water."

"What did it look like when swimming?" asked the zoologist.

"There were about a dozen blackish humps bobbing up and down as it moved away," Brumee reported. "They looked like ducks or geese swimming along in a single file. We used to argue as to what it was, but we didn't even know how big it might have been."

Jan Brumee reported he saw the monster again. "It was about seven or eight years after the first time,"

he told Olsson. "I was out on the lake with my family and some friends. A rainstorm came up and we headed to shore. That's when an animal moved right past us. It was swimming at an incredible speed. The creature left a very large wake. I didn't give chase that last time, realizing this thing had to be strong to swim so fast. With that sort of power, it could have overturned our boat."

Again, in the last days of July, 1873, Eric Olsson and a group of fishermen were enjoying a pleasant trip across the lake to their favorite fishing hole. As they rowed across the calm waters, a dark shape loomed up ahead of their boat.

"Easy, men," Olsson cautioned the oarsmen. "There's a log in our path."

The fishermen eased back on their oars and the boat drifted toward the object. When they approached within a few yards, the fishermen were astonished to find the wooden debris was actually the monster of Lake Storsjo.

"It followed our boat," Olsson told the Ostersund newspaper. "The creature seemed to be curious about who and what we were. One of my companions mentioned some of the past sightings with the animal. He reported that Jan Brumee said the serpent was much larger than what could be seen above the water. After discussing the matter, we pulled onto the beach of a small island. We waited there until the thing went away. What did it look like? We had a very good glimpse of the head fairly close up. It looked something like a dog's head."

Another Olsson saw the creature a year later in 1874. A fisherman from the town of Hallen, the elderly Swede spent most of his waking hours on the lake. After retiring from his job as mechanic at one of the Ostersund sawmills, Martin Olsson lived in a small cabin on the lake shore. Previous to his sighting,

the old man gave little credence to the reports.

"I was fishing near Froso Island when I got a strange feeling that someone was watching me," said Olsson. "I looked around behind me and the lake creature was not more than forty meters from my boat. I dropped my pole and line in the lake when I saw it. The weather was bright and sunny and I got a good view of the animal. The neck was long, about as round as a man's body at the base where it came up out of the water. It tapered up about six feet to a snakelike head that was larger than what I figured the neck could support. There was a hairy fringe just back of the neck, hanging down the back. This fringelike ribbon was stuck close to the neck, possibly because of the wetness. The color was grayish brown. The thing had two distinct eyes which were slightly red in appearance. The body was not exactly black – but sort of a blackish rust color in appearance. There were a couple of dark humps visible back beyond the neck. Both these humps and the part that was out of the water glistened in the sunlight. I did not see any scales – there was a skin on the animal that resembled the skin of a fish."

Olsson became frightened at the closeness of the creature.

"I didn't want to alarm the beast," he stated. "But I did want to get away from it as quickly as possible. Moving very cautiously, I took my oars and pulled slowly away from the spot. I became even more frightened when I had rowed about ten meters' distance and the animal began to swim toward me. I stopped rowing and the thing just lay there in the water staring at me. This must have gone on for about five minutes. I'm uncertain because my mind was on everything but the passage of time."

Olsson's heart leaped with fear when the creature started moving close to the boat. "There was no

doubt in my mind this thing could have overturned my little boat with ease," he stated. "I thanked God when he dropped beneath the water and I saw the blackish hump move out in the opposite direction."

Olsson judged the head was from two to three feet wide, that it was equally that distance in length. He said the reddish black eyes were the diameter of a small plate, set several inches apart on the head. "Somehow a sea serpent has come to our lake," said Olsson, commenting on ancient Norse tales of these creatures in the north sea. "I have no doubt that this beast will be seen again."

Olsson's last remark was prophetic.

Andy Ostman, a man known in the town of Assjon as a religious man seldom – if ever – given to exaggeration, was crossing the lake during August, 1889. Ostman was on an errand for his church when he saw a stretch of turbulent water directly ahead of his boat. Fairly close to the shore, Ostman turned his craft around and rowed toward dry land.

"I thought the threshing water was the start of a waterspout," said Ostman. "As I pulled toward shore, the noise increased to a high intensity. The waves also rose in height. I wondered if the waterspout was gaining on me. I turned around for a quick glance and there was the monster."

Ostman said the serpentine creature was about seventy meters behind his boat. "The creature's head was held about three meters up from the surface," he said. "The neck was at least ten meters out of the water, at least a meter wide and one of the most frightening heads I'll ever see was looking at me. I rowed away as rapidly as possible, not wishing to remain too close to the leviathan. The Bible mentioned that these monsters existed during the early days. I believe they have survived through the ages and are the work of the devil."

Two girls who lived on the edge of the lake triggered a massive hunt for the creature in 1893. Marta Olsson, an eighteen-year-old flaxen-haired young woman, walked down to the lake to do the family's weekly washing. She was accompanied by her sister, twenty-one-year-old Karin Olsson. There was a mild October sun rising over the lake when the girls started their washing that morning. As they were rinsing the clothes in the cool lake waters, the girls heard a splashing sound just beyond the beach.

Something dark and large, giving the appearance of an overturned boat, was moving across the lake toward them. The girls gave a quick cry of fear when they saw the monster's head rise above the surface. The creature moved rapidly toward the beach, frightening the girls and forcing them to retreat from the water. For the next two hours, the animal splashed around in the water just off the shore.

The two girls finally became tired of the monster's presence.

"I'm going to shoo that thing away!" Karin Olsson said defiantly. "Mama is going to be worried about us."

"Maybe we'd better stay here," said Marta.

Karin Olsson was a different girl, a warm and vital young woman whose resolute personality was known throughout the neighborhood. Several eager suitors had quietly fled from her forceful attitude toward life. As a shaft of sunlight filtered down through a passing cloud, Karin walked along the beach and collected an apronful of small stones. Watching her, Marta decided to find a few rocks. She followed her sister down the sandy terrain, picking stones and carrying them to the edge of the beach.

The two girls carried their stones into the water. Standing knee-deep in the lake, they pelted the monster with a barrage of stones. First one, then

another of the rocks fell short of the creature.

"Throw harder," advised Karin, chucking a heavy stone through the air.

The rock struck right on target, slamming against the creature's head. The beast gave a loud, hideous roar and flicked a tongue at the girls.

"Hit it, Marta," yelled Karin, throwing her stones in a rapid staccato.

The creature gave another roar and rushed toward the beach. Seeing the monster advance, the two girls dropped their rocks and scurried out of the water and across the beach. Karin scrambled up an embankment, finding refuge on a high railroad trestle. Marta scurried across the sandy beach, stumbled and fell onto a hillock. Behind her, she heard the monster's roar as she fought for a hold in the treacherous sand.

"Get to the tree!" cried Karin.

Marta's eyes widened with fear. Her head darted about, her lips trembled. Then, she saw a large tree rising up from the beach. She rose swiftly and scaled the lower branches, ascending to the uppermost limbs. As the two frightened girls watched from their safe positions, the Lake Storsjo monster roiled the water at the edge of the lake. Then the creature moved further out into the lake and, almost as if in a triumphant gesture, dived repeatedly in what must have been one of the world's most bizarre marine shows. It was almost ten minutes before the creature dived for the final time and vanished.

The editor of the *Ostersund Post* hurried to Sorbyn, the girls' home town, after hearing of the incident. He found two girls with a reputation for truthfulness, both shaken by the incident. Karin was the most talkative, her sister seemingly reluctant at first to discuss what had occurred. Patiently, the editor conducted a quiet interview that drew on the girls' recollection of events. He also compiled a lengthy

description of the animal.

"What did the head look like?" asked the editor.

"It was shaped like that of a large dog," replied Karin.

"Did you get a good look at it?"

"Yes, sir."

"How large was the head?"

"At least three meters wide and about that same size in length," replied Karin. "The eyes were round. They seemed to be sort of popeyed, but not too much. They were reddish, but that might have been the sunlight."

"Did you notice eyelids?"

"No, sir! The thing stared at us for the longest time but it never blinked. They were more like fish's eyes."

"What about the tongue?"

"It was long and dark reddish in color," answered Marta.

"Yes, and the mouth was large and opened more than you would expect from a normal jawbone," added Karin.

"I don't understand," said the editor, frowning slightly.

Karin's smooth, innocent face wrinkled as she reflected. "The mouth opened wider than a normal animal like a dog or cat," she said momentarily. "It was more like the jaws of a serpent."

"Where were the eyes located?"

"Where you would expect them on a snake," said Karin.

"How far apart?"

"About five centimeters," said Karin. "I think – "

Marta interrupted her sister. "I think they were further apart than that. I'd judge about eight to ten centimeters apart."

The editor wrote down their answers on a large pad. He asked, "What about the neck?"

"We agree on that," said Karin. "It was up out of the water by at least nine to ten feet."

"That's true," agreed Marta.

"Any other features you want to mention?"

"There was a set of fins in the front," said Marta. "Like what you might expect to find on a fish except they were naturally larger and more powerful. The animal used these fins to paddle the water, bobbing up and down with every stroke. I think these fins are what it uses to swim and move in the water."

"Were there any rear fins?"

"Not that we saw," declared Karin. "We had a very good look as it was swimming out there. I can't be certain whether there were fins in back. We didn't see any."

"How large were these fins?"

"Three to four meters in length, a bit more in width," said Karin. "Of course, they tapered out near the edge."

"Any sign of a tail?"

"No."

"How long was the body?"

"Beyond the neck, we saw a hump that measured about fourteen or fifteen meters in length," said Marta.

"I'd say maybe eighteen to twenty meters," answered Karin.

"Anything else?" asked the editor.

"You didn't ask about the ears," Marta said.

"There were ears on this thing?" said the editor in an incredulous voice.

"As plain as your ears are now," said Marta. "There was an ear on each side of the head. They didn't stick out like human ears, but were sort of plastered to the sides of the monster's head."

The editor scribbled down the young woman's

reply. He asked, "What about the color?"

"Easy," said Karin. "It was a dirty gray. There were some dark black spots running along the body."

"Anything else?"

"Just a feeling we had after the serpent started swimming away," said Karin. "We felt foolish for having provoked the beastie. We shouldn't have thrown rocks at the poor thing. Neither of us feel the creature meant to harm anyone. It was as if it was curious about us, wondering who we were and what we did. It made no advance toward us until we started pelting it with the stones."

The next sighting took place on Christmas morning, 1893, when A.M. Johannsson, his wife, and family, saw the creature break through the surface ice between Ostersund and Froso Island. The monster's neck and head popped up about three meters above the icy lake, then vanished. During the remainder of Christmas Day, the creature made numerous appearances around the lake, frightening skaters and people walking near the shore.

Two occurrences in 1894 triggered a sea serpent hunt in Lake Storsjo. The first was during an exceptionally hot July afternoon when two sea serpents blockaded the isolated fishing village of Erviken, located on the northern edge of Norway near Finland. The newspaper, *Finmarkposten*, said that the town's residents came down to the shore to watch the two strange specimens swim back and forth in front of the village's harbor entrance. Several fishermen admitted they had never witnessed anything of such proportions during their voyages.

The newspaper said:

"The sea serpent was a dark yellow color, had a round body and a length of at least 180 feet. It moved very fast through the water in serpentine coils. The head was about the size of a barrel, but rather

more pointed in front, and immediately behind the creature had a large ring situated between the head and the body, which seemed to be smooth and without fins."

A whaling vessel set out from the port of Hammerfest to try and capture one of the serpents. The whaler had been alerted by the crews of three Hammerfest fishing boats, all of whom came into port babbling about a giant sea snake. When the larger vessel arrived off Erviken near dusk, the serpents had tired of their entertainment for the villagers and vanished out to sea.

The Erviken incident provoked widespread interest in sea serpents and lake monsters throughout Scandinavia. Newspapers carried dispatches from the tiny fishing village. Feature writers penned lengthy articles on the possible existence of sea serpents. They went on to relate ancient descriptions of the creatures, wondering if the serpentine carvings on the bow of Viking *berserker* vessels were based on ancient knowledge that was now lost. One writer ventured the opinion that sea serpents and creatures of similar ilk should be preserved under an international treaty.

Back in Ostersund, Sweden several more sightings had been made of the creature in Lake Storsjo. While villagers discussed the monster at home and in their taverns, a wealthy widow with more money than sense decided to have the monster killed. Undoubtedly, she was acting out of what she believed were charitable motives. After all, the creature was swimming around in the lake and frightening people. The widow organized a limited business and sold stock to some of Sweden's most illustrious citizens. History even records that King Oscar II dug into the royal purse and bought a few shares of stock.

More than likely, these investors planned to kill the creature and exhibit the carcass in a sideshow. What-

ever their reasons, they hired a competent professional whaler to do the monster in. The Norwegian harpooner came into Ostersund with a vast collection of deadly spears, hooks and traps.

The whaler's first attempt at killing the monster was with a giant trap that was especially constructed for sea serpents. While several curious investors watched, the whaler cautiously set the quick-release spring steel jaws. A small, but very lively, young pig went into the trap as bait.

"The monster comes up to discover the squealing pig," said the whaler to his awed group of listeners. "The pig is attached to, but is not part of the trap. We hope to lure the monster in this direction, hoping he will circle the pig and be trapped."

To the investors' chagrin, pig after pig went into Lake Storsjo. But all that came out were numerous drowned pigs. After a few weeks of this activity, someone totaled up the company's bill for piglets. The investors then suggested to the whaler that a less expensive method of entrapping the monster be adopted.

Undeterred, the whaler had an Ostersund blacksmith pound out a lot of special fishhooks, behemoth in size, their lines tied to sturdy trees, rocks or bridges. Result: total failure!

Jokes began to be told in Ostersund and other lake communities about the great fishing expedition. One anecdote went like this:

"The monster fisherman was out all day yesterday with his hooks."

"What did he catch?"

"A bad cold!"

When the company had first organized, several businessmen in Ostersund had helped to capitalize the enterprise. They were quick to tell their friends and acquaintances about the profits to be made in

capturing a lake monster. As the whaler grew mor frustrated and the jokes more numerous, the investors decided to end their venture. Quietly, the paid the whaler for his efforts. The poor man le Ostersund without ever catching a glimpse of th legendary lake creature. Many of the investors decide to donate the strange array of equipment to th town. They placed their company into receivership The widow decided to take a trip to Italy for a litt sun for her arthritis.

Thus, the great monster hunt on Lake Storsj ended.

However, the vacationing tourist who ends up a the museum in Ostersund today can view th harpoons and other equipment used in the ventur While everyone decided that the creature was either a figment of a sighter's imagination, or had died, it made several other appearances in 1896. Several people got a close-up view of the monster in 189 before the animal vanished in a mass of roiling water. The creature performed for a dozen witnesses in June, 1896, just outside the town of Hacknas. That same year, a newspaper reporter and several friends rowed out on the lake after seeing the creature pop into view.

"At first we thought the dark mass in the water was a boat that had turned over," said the reporter, P.E. Asen. "We observed the mass for a few moments. then realized it was the infamous monster of Lake Storsjo. I had just read about the sea-orn mentioned in olden times. I thought this creature might be a throwback to something that once lived in olden days. I talked my companions into rowing out on the lake where the serpent was making a lot of threshing maneuvers, raising waves and disturbing the calmness of the lake."

What they saw was a smooth-bodied creature that

submerged in the water. Asen and his friends orted seeing the head partially out of the water, an ject about two to three meters long. They could determine the exact width due to the creature's ition. The animal was darkish red, "cinnamon ored," in appearance, with two grayish ears and eral dark humps showing slightly above the water-ce.

Asen's group also noticed that "something like a " was moving at the front of the monster as it mained floating near them. After rowing around the ating creature for a half hour, the animal apparently ed of their game and slowly, but quietly, moved ross the lake out of sight.

By now, zoologist Peter Olsson's notebooks were ammed with reports on the monster in Lake Storsjo. wo young boys were playing on a beach near alla, saw the creature moving toward them and rought a dozen excited adults to view what appeared o be "an upturned boat." A mechanic had another iew of the monster just off the edge of Ostersund on August 1, 1898. Olof Johansson was fishing when he aw what appeared to be a floating log. Johansson was astonished when the log rose out of the water, looked around, and swam away.

Based on these and other descriptions by eyewitnesses, Dr. Peter Olsson developed these conclusions:

1. The creature was from fifteen to forty-five feet in length.

2. The head was rounded like a dog's. It was covered with smooth skin with a white mane or ears behind. Olsson felt the creature raised its head and neck above the surface only when attracted by something of interest.

3. Witnesses had described their first view of the creature as looking like a capsized boat, a floating log, a line of floating ducks, and similar objects.

4. The animal could swim at speeds of up to forty five miles per hour. One witness said the creature moved away at an even faster speed, but the Swedish zoologist felt this witness was not rational due to fright.

5. The method of swimming was by either fins or short, but powerful legs.

6. The monster had either a hairy mane or ears just behind the head.

7. The creature apparently churned up water when making a fast disappearance.

8. Few sightings had been made with the creature on land.

9. Most sightings took place when the weather was pleasant and the surface of the lake was calm.

10. The animal became outraged and roared when frightened. It would make definite advances on young women who threw stones and hit it.

11. Most observers felt the creature was primarily curious. Despite their first moments of fear, they said the monster made no hostile motions toward them.

12. The animal was possibly a vegetarian or lived on fish in the lake. The beastie had never been seen eating meat.

13. Color ranged from a grayish black to a reddish yellow. It was thought this might be due to viewing different parts of the animals' body. While the top humps and skin might be gray-black, the belly could be lighter or yellowish in coloration.

14. The eyes were fairly large, about the size of a saucer.

15. The monster had a flicking tongue in a large, wide mouth.

After sifting through his files and compiling his list of evidence, Dr. Peter Olsson concluded the creature was a giant seal-type. This was the view put

forth by Dr. A.C. Oudemans who felt the Megophias, a long-necked seal with a lengthy tail, could account for all sea serpent sightings. Oudemans' book, *The Great Sea Serpent,* was a 592-page volume published in the Netherlands in 1892. It created a controversy in the world of science before publication. When in print, *The Great Sea Serpent* stirred up a tidal wave of criticism. To consider that sea serpents existed was heresy to most nineteenth-century scientists. To go beyond the boundaries of academia and try to identify a nonexistent creature was, according to one critic, "absolute balderdash!"

Fortunately, Dr. Olsson fared better than Dr. Oudemans, who was drummed out of his directorship of the Royal Zoological and Biological societies because of his book on the sea serpent. Olsson continued to teach school at Ostersund for many years, then concentrated on other interests for several more privately printed monographs.

The Lake Storsjo monster?

He's apparently alive, well and enjoying life. After the allied troops stormed into Berlin to end the fighting of World War II, the *New York Times* published a report from Ostersund about a local sighting of the creature. Periodically, sightings have been made since that time. There was a new "flap" in 1965 with numerous people telling their experiences to newsmen and TV news teams.

Although the sightings continue, scientists have failed to investigate the matter. Perhaps they have read about the distressing failure of the Norwegian harpooner who spent a year hunting the creature and left town without a glimpse.

Chapter VI

UNKNOWN ANIMALS IN AFRICA

Carl Hagenbeck, one of the largest wild-anima dealers supplying zoos, had a staff of "Bring Them Back Alive" hunters who collected specimens o strange, unusual animals. From his headquarters i Stellingen, Germany, the wild-animal dealer bega to hear stories of a *nigvbe* beast along the "Pepp Coast" of Liberia.

The first mention of the strange creature was mad by a Dr. Drapper, who traveled along the Liberia coast and published an account of the animal lif found there in 1668. Dr. Drapper felt the *nigvb* was a species of wild hog. While pondering on th reports filtering into his office, Carl Hagenbeck decided the "wild hog" might be related to an animal described by Dr. Samuel G. Morton. The American physician had returned from a journey to Africa with the skull of a pygmy animal that belonged to the hippopotamus family. In 1844, Dr. Morton named his unknown animal with the generic term *Choeropsis*.

By the turn of the century, several American and German wild-game hunters had returned from Africa with the skins of the elusive animal. Museums mounted

skins, labeling the animal as extinct. "No one has er seen the creature so it must be part of a dead ecies," said one museum curator.

Carl Hagenbeck disagreed. In 1910 he called one of is best hunters back to Germany. Hans Schomburgk as known on the dark continent as one of the best imal collectors and hunters in the field. A persistent an with a warm sense of humor, Schomburgk had een in some of the most remote areas of the African ntinent. His searches for rare, unusual animals had ecome legend among other hunters. Once Schomburgk went after an animal, he never gave up until he elusive beast was captured.

During a meeting in Stellingen, Carl Hagenbeck sked, "What's your opinion of the pygmy hippo?"

"The natives say it doesn't exist."

"I want you to find me one," said Hagenbeck. "Find me a pygmy hippo and bring it back alive."

"It may not exist."

"Then stay out there until you're sure," answered Hagenbeck. "I'm convinced there's a living animal out there somewhere. You're the only man who can find it. Keep after it even if it takes a year."

Until then, Schomburgk had paid scant attention to talk about a miniature hippo. On his return to Africa, he landed in Liberia and started putting together a safari. Hunters, animal collectors and guides thought Schomburgk had been out in the sun too long.

"Stay here in the city and enjoy life," advised a Dutchman. "You'll be pounding around there in the bush for a creature that doesn't exist. The results will be the same. You'll just tell Hagenbeck that his hippo is nothing but imaginative fiction."

"Hagenbeck wants one," said Schomburgk.

The Dutchman laughed. "You can't give a man what doesn't exist. There is no such animal."

"We'll see," said Schomburgk.

Leaving the cities, Schomburgk led a safari int some of the most remote districts of Liberia. He w surprised to discover that large hippos could b found in that region, despite books that said th creature didn't live there. After several futile month of wandering, the hunter found a village where th natives claimed the *nigbve* could be found.

"*Nigbve* is like a pig," said the village chieftain "But real big pig. He like water and lives in river an lake 'round here. He got big teeth that bite men int two pieces. Him jaws are strong."

"I want a *nigbve*," said Schomburgk.

"Hard to catch with spears," said the chief. "You gun get one."

Schomburgk shook his head. "I want one alive."

Without ceremoney, the African chief concluded their conversation. The chief walked out of Schom burgk's tent and back to the royal hut. During the next hour a series of giggling natives came to peer into Schomburgk's tent. A patient man, Schomburgk accepted the visitors through most of the afternoon. When a group of elderly men and women came to stare at him, Schomburgk demanded an explanation.

An old man with skin the color of walnuts stepped forward. "You want to catch *nigbve* alive?" he asked.

"That's true," Schomburgk said peevishly.

"Our village has many brave men," said the old man. "They are great hunters. Catching *nigbve* alive is not possible. Only crazy men try that. You the first crazy white man we ever see!"

After that introduction to native logic, Schomburgk went on to hire several native guides. The first year was fruitless. Even the best guides were unable to lead the German hunter to the *nigbve*. Schomburgk wrote to Hagenbeck in Germany, suggesting that the safari might be terminated. Several weeks later, a

messenger brought the German animal dealer's reply. "Bring me back a live specimen."

Schomburgk kept after his elusive animal and, finally, on June 13, 1911, he saw a pygmy hippo feeding in a small river. The animal was a short distance from his hunter's blind and Schomburgk had good range for a shot. However, he wrote of his disappointment to Hagenbeck in Germany.

"The animal does exist and I was no more than twenty feet from it," wrote Schomburgk. "I had no way to try and catch it. I could have gotten a dead specimen for you, but I was afraid to shoot. Pygmy hippos have been considered extinct for the past quarter century. I might have killed the last living specimen. I will shoot only at the last resort and only when I know there is more than one animal alive."

After seeing the *nigbve*, Schomburgk returned to the capital of Liberia, Monrovia, because the dangerous rainy season was setting in. He spent the winter in Germany and on Christmas Eve, 1912 sailed back to Africa for another search for the pygmy hippo. Two months later he killed the animal after determining there were several in the area. A day after he downed the first creature, Schomburgk caught a live specimen. He cabled Hagenbeck: *"Pygmy hippo caught. Is a nice little animal!"*

On his trip back to Germany with his prize, Schomburgk recalled the various rumors the natives had told him of other unusual animals. Over lunch with Carl Hagenbeck one day, the hunter mentioned a "half dragon, half elephant" that was said to live in the remote swamps of Africa.

Schomburgk concluded, "I don't know if those tales are just rumors or have a substance of truth."

Carl Hagenbeck laid down his fork. He looked across the table with a grin. "Don't you have an opinion?" he asked.

"You have to remember that the natives like to please a white visitor," said Schomburgk. "This is due to their natural friendliness and the desire for a reward. I've had natives tell me of ten-legged animals with purple skin, one eye and a dozen tusks. One old man once described an animal that had to be a unicorn. It was almost a believable tale until he mentioned it was the size of a ten-story building."

"Just the same," said Carl Hagenbeck, "I've been getting reports about this dragon that's supposed to live around lakes and rivers." He went on to tell of rumors forwarded by other hunters employed by his firm.

In his book, *Wild und Wilde im Herzen Afrikas*, Hans Schomburgk told of arriving on the shores of Lake Bangweolo in search of hippos. He was surprised to discover the absence of hippos and other wildlife around the lake. In his book, Schomburgk wrote:

". . . (the natives) reported there is an animal living in this lake, which though smaller than a hippo, kills them and feeds on them. It must be fully amphibian in its habits, it never comes to the shore and its footprints are never found. Unfortunately, I thought this story was a fairytale and failed to investigate the details. Later, I mentioned it to Carl Hagenbeck and I am now convinced it must be a saurian of some kind. I am of this opinion because Hagenbeck has received reports from other people that fully agree with my observations and the details reported to me by the natives. Hagenbeck sent a special expedition to Lake Bangweolo; unfortunately, this expedition didn't even find the lake."

We might now know the truth of lake monsters had Carl Hagenbeck sent Schomburgk after the "saurian" in the African lake. Before we dismiss the mysterious animal as suspect, we must turn to an official expedition to the Cameroons that was financed

by the German government in 1913. This group was led by Freiherr von Stein zu Lausnitz, whose report to the Gernam government contains a detailed description of the creature and its habits.

Captain von Stein interviewed members of several native tribes about a "creature feared very much by the Negroes of certain parts of the territory of the Congo, the lower Ubangi, the Sanga, and the Ikelemba rivers." The beast was called *Mokele-mbembe* by the Africans. Captain von Stein said:

"The creature is reported not to live in the smaller rivers, like the two Likualas, and in the rivers mentioned only a few individuals are said to exist. At the time of our expedition a specimen was reported from the nonnavigable part of the Sanga River, somewhere between the two rivers Mbaio and Pikunda; unfortunately in a part of the river that could not be explored due to the brusque end of our expedition. (*Author's note:* the expedition ended when World War I started.)

"The animal is said to be of a brownish gray color with a smooth skin, its size approximating that of an elephant; at least that of a hippopotamus. It is said to have a long and very flexible neck and only one tooth but a very long one; some say it is a horn. A few spoke about the long muscular tail like that of an alligator. Canoes coming near it are said to be doomed; the animal is said to attack the vessels at once and to kill the crews but without eating the bodies.

"The creature is said to live in caves that have been washed out by the river in the clay of its shores at sharp bends. It is said to climb the shore even at daytime in search of food; its diet is said to be entirely vegetable. This feature disagrees with a possible explanation of the myth. The preferred plant was shown to me, it is a kind of liana with large

white blossoms, with a milky sap and applelike fru
At the Ssombo River I was shown a path said to h
been made by this animal in order to get its food. T
path was fresh and there were plants of the describ
type nearby. But since there were too many tracks
elephants, hippos, and other large mammals, it w
impossible to make out a particular spoor with an
amount of certainty."

During the 1920s there were reports of an unusu
creature called the *Irizima* that allegedly inhabited th
waters of Lake Edward, Africa. The monster wa
said by natives to have an elephant's head, the legs o
a hippo, and a snakelike head. One white hunter wen
into the Congo forests and jungles to kill the beast
He returned to Cape Town with a wild story of seein
a huge, prehistoric beast stomping through a swamp
one afternoon.

"It was the deadliest animal I've ever seen," said th
hunter. "It was a brontosaurus, a living specimen o
that prehistoric dinosaur!"

This report was published in *The National Review*,
London, in July, 1937, and author Frank W. Lane
mentioned several other African sightings. He reported
that the Hottentots around the Oranje river of Africa
had reports of a *Groot slang*, a reptilian creature
that lived near the river.

"Officers of the Victoria Nyanza steamers have
described a long-necked prehistoric beast seen in the
lake," wrote Lane, "while the Barotses of the Zambesi
declare they have encountered a monster which they
call the 'great one.' White hunters who went in search
of it returned with a report that they found a five-
feet-long footprint in the white mud."

Lane went on to say that the chieftain of the
Barotse claimed to have seen the beast in the swamps
on his tribal land. The chieftain made a report to the
British government, claiming the creature had a "head

like a snake, making a huge track in the reeds as large
as a full-sized wagon would make if the wheels were
removed."

The Congo was the source of another sighting of a
prehistoric beast during the summer of 1920. Ac-
cording to Lane, a man named Lepage was on a
hunting expedition in the Belgian colony when he
saw a monster that might have been at home in the
Miocene Era. Apparently the beast charged the
hunter, snorting as it roared across the terrain. Lepage
fired his gun, then turned and fled when the bullet
failed to stop the monster.

After a short distance, the animal gave up the chase
and Lepage was able to observe the creature through
binoculars. "It was about twenty-four to twenty-five
feet in length," he told newsmen after his return from
the safari. "There was a large, scaly hump above the
shoulders. The front feet appeared to be formed like
those of a horse, but I discovered the hind feet were
definitely cloven. This was from both my observations
and a detailed study of the tracks left by the creature.
There was a short, horny projection flaring up above
the nostril. A long pointed snout and tusklike horns
completed the head."

The creature in Lake Victoria came under investi-
gation following World War I. Several adventurous
groups went after the *lau* – that familiar creature
found in lakes around the world. The *lau* has been
described as having a humped torso with a brownish
top and the familiar yellow or light-colored under-
belly. The neck is long, serpentine and the animal is
said to have tentacles.

Once we leave the Congo and travel down to South
Africa, we find a number of old reports about lake
and river creatures with familiar features. Several
sightings of a "long-necker" have been reported in
the vicinity of the Orange River, particularly near the

Great Falls. Fred Cornell, a settler, claimed to have seen a serpentine creature at that point in 1910. Cornell was accompanied by Q.H. Brown, N.B. Way and three natives.

"At the cry of something strange from the natives, I turned and saw something black, huge and sinuous swimming rapidly against the current," said Cornell. "The monster kept its enormous body under the water, but the neck was plainly visible. The monster may well have been a very gigantic python, but it was of incredible size. This reptile may have lived for hundreds of years. Pythons approaching it in size have been said to have lived that long."

Some investigators have speculated that the African "monsters" might well have been these large snakes zipping across the surface of a lake or stream. There is also the distinct possibility that a large catfish could produce the appearance of a "gigantic monster." Giant catfish in South America often reach twenty feet in length, particularly the *Arapaima gigas* species which has been known to attack people near the river. While not a true catfish, these monsters have been dragged out of the rivers by crews of men and horses. Their weight sometimes reached five hundred pounds.

Several related species can be found in Africa, Indonesia, India and Africa. While the giant catfish answers some descriptive features of the African water monsters, their configuration does not explain the presence of a serpentine neck and head.

Much of the investigative effort in Africa has come from an interest in identifying the dragon on the Ishtar Gate. This mystery started in 1887 when Professor Robert Koldewey left his home in Germany for a brief visit to the site of ancient Babylon. While prowling through the ruins, Professor Koldewey noticed a reflection in the rubble. He picked up a

portion of an ancient brick. One side of the old brick was covered with a shining blue glaze. Koldewey dropped the fragment of brick into his specimen bag and continued on his journey.

Ten years passed and Professor Koldewey spent the last three days of 1897 back in Babylon looking for more of these glazed bricks. He had used his personal funds to make the trip, after receiving an announcement from the Royal Museum, Berlin, and the Orient Society of Germany. The two organizations had informed Professor Koldewey that money would be forthcoming for more work on the Babylonian ruins – if something new and interesting could be guaranteed.

Koldewey discovered enough of the blue-glazed fragments to convince the German *burghers* to write several large checks for more work. He returned with a complete crew and commenced to excavate the ruins on March 26, 1899. Several interesting finds were made in the digs, but nothing spectacular was discovered until 1902 when the Ishtar Gate was found.

Even in ruins, the Ishtar Gate proved to be a fascinating sight. A semicircular arch, the gate is flanked by gigantic walls that include watchtowers that overlook a long causeway. The gate is composed of bright blue, white, yellow and black glazed bricks. To add to the beauty of the structure, bas reliefs of delicate construction have been inserted in the gate. These reliefs depict animals in nearlife positions, creating a beautiful splendor.

Lions are inset along the causeway, their lifelike images acting as silent guards. Fierce bulls of unusual strength alternate with rows of a mystery animal on the gate itself. Koldewey wrote: ". . . The rows are repeated one above the other: dragons and bulls are never mixed in the same horizontal row, but a line of

bulls is followed by one of the *Sirrush*. Each single representation of an animal occupies a height of thirteen brick courses, and between them are eleven plain courses, so that the distance of one to the foot of the next is twenty-four courses. These twenty-four courses measure exactly two meters (6 feet, 8 inches) or four Babylonian ells in height."

The bas relief of the *Sirrush* – the dragon of Ishtar Gate – has posed a zoological enigma since the gate was excavated. An inscription on the gate reads: "Fierce *rimi* and grim *sirrushi* I put onto the gateways and thus supplied the gates with such overflowing rich splendor that all humanity may view it with wonder." The cuneiform was put there by King Nebuchadnezzar around 600 B.C.

The *rimi* presented no problems for zoologists. It was quickly established as a depiction of wild cattle that once roamed Eurasia, the dangerous Aurochs. Whole herds of these beasts once roamed the plains and valleys before they died off. The last *rimi* is believed to have died in the Balkans in 1639. Therefore, the *rimi* and lions at the gate were living animals when the structure was built.

The *Sirrush* became the intriguing mystery.

Koldewey felt the dragonlike creature was not a myth. The bas relief outlined a slender body covered with carefully deliniated scales, a long scaly tail and a slim neck ending in a serpentine head. While the dragon's mouth is closed, a long forked tongue projects outward. Skin is rolled back over the head, gathering around a pair of horns. "It is absolutely remarkable," said Koldewey, "that in spite of the scales, the animal possesses hair. Three corkscrew ringlets fall over the head near the ears. And on the neck, where the lizard's comb should be, is a long row of curls."

The feet of the *Sirrush* are unusual. The front feet

end in a catlike paw similar to the tiger or ordinary house cat. The back feet are birdlike in appearance, large four-toed appendages with thick scales. While Robert Graves and some other scholars have said the *Sirrush* is a symbolic rendition by an artist, others point to the vivid realism of the lions and *rimi* at the Ishtar Gate. They point out that paleontologists have unearthed macabre monsters from fossil digs that would terrorize modern humanity. There are fossil creatures with spiraling necks and dangerous tails, huge heads on small bodies, small heads on large bodies, serpents with horns, and bird-footed dinosaurs who trotted along on their rear legs. There is even the prehistoric fossil of a bird found recently in Texas that had a measured wing-span wider than a modern bomber!

Professor Koldewey wrote that the Sirrush dragon on the Ishtar Gate was similar to our extinct saurians.

"The *Sirrush*. . . far exceeds all other creatures in the uniformity of his physiological characteristics," the professor stated. "If only the forelegs were not so emphatically and characteristically feline, such an animal might actually have existed."

Five years later in 1918, Professor Koldewey was still wrestling with the mysterious dragon. In *Das Ishchtar Tor in Babylon*, the splendidly illustrated report of his Babylonian adventure, he said: "If such a creature like the *Sirrush* existed in nature it would belong to the order of dinosaurs and the sub-order ornithopods. The Iguanodon of the Cretaseous layers of Belgium is the closest relative of the Dragon of Babylon."

Only sixty years ago, the *Sirrush* was believed to be one of those mythical "impossibles," a rendition from an artist's fertile mind. Koldewey knew that the Bible mentioned King Nebuchadnezzar, and he speculated that the Babylonian priests had some

gigantic reptile caged in the darkness of some temple dungeon. He guessed that the priests could show the reptile as a living *Sirrush*, realizing the darkness in the dungeon and their visitor's fears would allay any suspicion. The Bible also mentions that Daniel is supposed to have killed the Babylonian *Sirrush* by concocting a pill from hair and bitumen.

The mystery is heightened when we consider that the Babylonians are not supposed to have known anything about paleontology. The *Sirrush* cannot be a copy from some bag of reconstructed bones. In fact, dinosaur bones have not been dug up around Babylon. Therefore, the artist could not have been working from empirical knowledge.

So it must have been artistic imagination. . . or was it?

We return again to our remarkable wild-animal hunter, Hans Schomburgk. During one of his journeys into the lake districts of Central Africa, Schomburgk returned to Germany with several of the brightly colored bricks that were used in the Ishtar Gate. This was some time before Professor Koldewey published his reports on the Babylonian mysteries. Willy Ley, the American writer, has speculated that the *Sirrush* depicts the lake monsters of the African interior. Bernard Heuvelmans, the cautious and well-documented European scientist, wrote in *On The Track of Unknown Animals:*

". . . The *Sirrush* could have lived in central Africa, where it has been proved the Chaldeans went, and where they could have seen a giant lizard. When Hans Schomburgk came back from Africa with native tales of the Chipekwe, he also brought back several glazed bricks of the same type as those used on the Ishtar Gate. Naturally he had no idea that the beasts and the bricks could have any connection. It is therefore possible that one of the amphibious species of the

ongo 'dragons' was known to the Chaldeans 5,000 ears ago from travelers' tales, and that this was the *irrush* of the Ishtar Gate."

Heuvelmans' mention of the 'Chipekwe' is related the 'Congo dragon' said to live around Lake angweolo. He amassed considerable data in *On The Track of Unknown Animals* from almost forty separate sightings of the creature. About the size of a ippo, amphibious, and yet mysterious, the Chipekwe eports led Heuvelmans to conclude that there were hree different creatures. ". . . It is not surprising," wrote Heuvelmans, "that a mixture of these creatures as produced an absurd and fantastic beast, which is difficult to believe in, let alone identify."

He identifies the type as a short-snouted crocodile, "water elephant," and a giant catfish. Yet some eports indicate there is another creature that would e vaguely similar to a dinosaur. While several investigators have embraced the theory of dinosaurs existing in Africa, Heuvelmans was more cautious in his support of this mind-boggling theory. He wrote:

"All that we can really say is that there seems to be large and unknown reptile in Central Africa. Its identity remains to be determined, and in view of its size, it is probably, like the crocodiles, the Komodo dragon and giant tortoise, a relic of the great reptile empire that flourished in the Jurassic period. I have already mentioned the remarkable geological and climatic stability in Africa, which could hardly be better for preserving an ancient type."

Central Africa would have been a haven for prehistoric creatures. The reign of the dinosaurs ended about forty or fifty million years ago. With the demise of the saurians, both North America and Europe entered a prolonged wet spell known as the Cenomanian flood. This moist interlude was followed by warm, pleasant weather during the Tertiary period.

If a few thousand saurians were roaming around in the American and European boondocks, the advent of the ice age would have killed them. As most scientists believe, the Ice Age destroyed most of the mammals who lived in the path of glaciers.

While these climatic changes were taking place elsewhere, Africa was a virtual paradise for dinosaurs. The central region is ringed by abundant protection against the elements. The rain forests have a historical stability that goes back into the vague mists of time. Isolated, with plenty of vegetation to feast upon, the dinosaurs could have existed into the present age in remote areas of Africa.

The abundant plant life would have protected the dinosaurs against the deadly "domino theory." This hypothesis by several scientists says the saurian reign ended because of climatic change. A small reduction in temperatures in North America and Europe would have decreased the growing season and the crops. Without a large volume of vegetation for their diet, the plant-eating dinosaurs began to die off. As the vegetarians dropped, food for flesh-eating dinosaurs became scarce. Finally, even the vegetarians turned into flesh-eaters and the whole group began to kill each other to remain alive. Eventually, the next-to-last dinosaur was devoured by his companion. The last dinosaur on earth was left to starve in some arid valley.

While the natural domino effect was taking place elsewhere, dinosaurs in Africa could have feasted contentedly on seemingly limitless plants and animal life. The *Sirrush* may have been one of those creatures who lived until the present century – sheltered by Africa's isolation, geological and climatic stability.

The idea that dinosaurs are now hopping around in the backwoods of Africa is, to be sure, far-fetched. But we might conclude that some of the subspecies

died off millions of years later than we believe. Those creatures who lived in lakes and rivers would have been the last to go. While unusual changes can and do take place on land, there is relatively little change in aquatic areas.

Chapter VII

NESSIE IN NORTH AMERICA?

Nessie, the behemoth underwater creature who lives in the waters of Loch Ness, is certainly the most famous of all lake monsters. While Nessie has received most of the front page publicity due to the number of sightings, there have been persistent reports of equally mysterious animals in fresh-water lakes around the world. These aquatic creatures are large, often bizarre, and frightening to the casual observer.

Typical of these reports is something that swims around in Lake Poheneganook, two hundred miles east of Quebec City, Canada. Dr. Vadim Vladikov went to the Canadian lake country in 1958 to check with witnesses who claimed to have seen a large monster in those waters. Dr. Vladikov was interested in the bizarre claims because of his scientific background; added interest was due to his job as director of the Quebec Department of Game and Fisheries. Naturally, a man with his credentials had no axe to grind in the highly controversial issue of prehistoric water animals.

Following his investigation, Dr. Vladikov said: "I have questioned a great many people in Saint

Eleuthere, a village near the lake area. They all describe the same thing – an animal between twelve and eighteen feet long, black or brown in color, with a round back two or three feet wide, and a sawtooth fin down the center. Anytime anyone approaches close, the animal slithers away and slinks below the lake's surface. It's probably a big fish, although it just might be something else."

The Lake Poheneganook incident is unusually bizarre even among sightings of lake monsters. "We were just finishing up a day of fishing and pulling the boat to shore," said Raymond McIntosh, telling newsmen of his sighting in 1962. "It was getting close to dark when we reached the shore. My wife heard a threshing noise in the woods behind us and mentioned something about a wild animal. I turned in the direction of the trees and both of us saw a dark-colored thing come out of the woods. It was about ten yards from us and, while the light wasn't the greatest, we could make out some distinct features. The silhouette appeared to be of something about the length of a large automobile. There was a definite fin on the back, angled slightly backward at a sloping of slightly less than forty-five degrees. The thing sort of slithered across the sand and gravel – as if it was propelling itself with fins or tiny legs."

McIntosh grabbed a flashlight from his boat. "I guess my curious nature overcame my fear of what might happen if the thing turned on us," he said. "It was moving rather slowly, almost laboriously, across the beach. My flashlight outlined the features of the creature's head. This part of the body was almost reptilian in appearance, like the features of a lizard or one of those crocodiles down in the States. That was about all we saw. The creature reached the edge of the water, pushed its way in and then disappeared beneath the surface."

McIntosh and his wife waited a few minutes and then walked down the beach to check for possible tracks. "We didn't want to be there if the thing decided to come back," the Quebec machinist admitted. "After waiting a decent interval and figuring the thing was in the lake for the rest of the night, we went to look for tracks. There were no distinct impressions of footprints or flipper indentations as such. There was a series of small, slightly moist areas where the thing must have put out a fin, foot or something to move itself back into the water."

What was it?

McIntosh informed newsmen he believed the creature was a strange fish of some type. "But what kind of fish comes out of the water and roams around in the woods?" he asked cryptically.

The lakes in that region are part of the group that includes Lake Manitoba and Winnipegosis. Since this part of Canada was first settled, there have been stories of something large, strange and frightening startling fishermen and boaters. Another expert who investigated the rumors was Professor James A. McLeod, head of the department of Zoology at the University of Manitoba. Professor McLeod spent a long time trying to track down the creature. He concluded that the alleged monster was probably nothing more than a large snapping turtle.

Professor McLeod's hypothesis was shattered when a local fisherman came up with a strange-looking bone he had found on the shore of the lake. Although the original bone had been consumed by a fire, the fisherman was able to reconstruct a fairly accurate replica. Either the fisherman was a secret student of paleontology or a man with a good memory. Whatever the process, the fisherman came up with a model of a bone from a creature that was thought to be extinct for several millions of years.

Professor McLeod took one glance at the replica and forgot about looking for snapping turtles. "The giant prehistoric reptiles that once lived here might somehow have survived until the present day," he said. "Of course, we are skeptical, but it is a scientific possibility."

Another fantastic lake monster has been frightening citizens around Lake Champlain for more than three centuries. The lake, which stretches into the United States from Canada, runs between the borders of the states of Vermont and New York. It is believed to have once been a part of the Atlantic Ocean, cut off during an earth upheaval. People who believe in the Lake Champlain monster claim a family of sea serpents may have been landlocked during the ancient catastrophe.

Credence is given to the reports by the journal of Samuel de Champlain, the French explorer who discovered the lake in 1609 and gave his name to it. Champlain wrote that he was on the lake when he encountered a creature that was serpentlike, about twenty feet long, as thick as a barrel, and with a head like that of a horse.

Over the years, hundreds of reputable residents of that area have made sightings. While their descriptions of the animal vary, most sighters say it is reptilian in appearance, about thirty to forty feet long, and many claim the head is formed like a horse. The sightings have increased during the past one hundred years.

Dr. Donald Mears, a chiropractor from St. Albans, Vermont, encountered the Lake Champlain monster a few years ago. "I was cruising along the east shore of the lake when I saw this thing in the water," said Dr. Mears. "It looked like a huge snake, only larger and broader. It was dark in color and had a long neck. When I went to get my camera, the thing disappeared."

Another Vermonter says the sightings seem to

occur in cycles.

Leon Dean, an English professor who has retired from the University of Vermont, has written about the monster for magazines and newspapers. He has also kept a scrapbook on reports of the various sightings.

"Sometimes you won't hear a single word about the monster for a few years," Dean said a few years ago. "Then, all of a sudden, he starts popping up all over the place and reports come in from everywhere."

Walter Hard, who resides in Burlington, Vermont, is editor of *Vermont Life*, a monthly publication. Both Mr. Hard and his wife, Dorothea, had a good view of the monster shortly after they moved to a cottage in Burlington in 1960. Hard related:

"Neither my wife nor I were familiar with the legend of the sea monster. One day I was looking out over the lake just after a thunderstorm. I saw something about a hundred yards offshore. At first I figured it was a swimmer. Then I saw it had a globular, dirty white head. I realized then that it was much too large to be a swimmer. Beneath the water was something that appeared reddish in color and around twenty feet in length. It seemed to be attached to the head."

Hard called to his wife and asked her to bring his field glasses. "As I tried to focus the glasses, it started to swim across the lake," Hard explained. "The head never submerged. We saw something out there that was definitely larger than any fish. It didn't fit the description of anything I'd seen or heard of before. As far as I'm concerned there is some kind of marine monster in Lake Champlain."

Another sighting of the Lake Champlain monster occurred in 1972 when two New York scuba divers were vacationing near Moquam Bay. Hearing a rumor about a sunken cabin cruiser down in St. Alban's Bay, they headed south along the eastern shore of the lake.

ed Shanafelt, thirty-eight, and Morris Lucia, thirty-ur, were unprepared for their encounter with the izarre lake creature.

"We were just getting up in the morning after mping out that night," Shanafelt explained to ewsmen. "We decided to do a little diving after reakfast, while we waited for the fog to lift. There asn't much traffic on the lake, but I've learned to e cautious when you're in a small boat. Morry had een in the water a couple of minutes, swimming a ittle ways offshore, when I came down to get in. We were planning to go out and see if there was a drop-off in that part of the lake."

Both men were in the water when Morris Lucia motioned to his diving partner. "He was frantically ignaling to me," Shanafelt recalled. "From his ctions I knew we were in some kind of danger. After he saw I understood the situation was dangerous, we both started back to shore. I surfaced about ten feet out, looking back to see what had given Morry such a fright. That's when I saw this thing that couldn't have been anything other than a sea serpent. Christ! That sounds crazy but there's no other way to explain it."

Both Shanafelt and Lucia gave identical descriptions of the creature. "It was hard to judge how long the body was," said Lucia. "I estimated around forty feet and Fred believes it was more like forty-five to fifty. We agreed that the head looked about like a horse. It was slightly rounded in appearance, a sort of mushroom gray in color. The head sat on a long, round neck that was dark brown or black. The neck rose up about eight feet out of the water at the highest point."

The Lake Champlain monster moved closer to

shore as the two divers rushed to the beach. "I don
think it was threatening us," explained Morris Lu
"Once, it cocked its head in a childlike manner as
it was curious about our appearance. It didn't ma
any effort to harm us. I think we could have go
right back in the water without fear of being hu
Of course, I wouldn't have done that for a milli
dollars on the spot."

Both divers have returned to the lake whenev
they have had the time. "We watched the serpent f
about two minutes altogether," said Shanafelt. "
we were hallucinating, it was one really wild tri
And both of us took it. The creature just sort o
turned its head and moved away. After it got a way
out into the water, the head dropped beneath th
surface and it was gone."

Lucia and Shanafelt believe there may be a famil
of the monsters living in Lake Champlain. "Everyone
running over to Scotland to hunt for the Loch Ne
creature," said Lucia. "Hell, we've got the same thin
closer to home. The one thing I regret is that w
didn't get a photograph. There was a good Niko
camera lying right in the boat. Neither of us had sens
enough to think about a picture until the thing wa
gone. My God! It could have been the most fabulou
picture in history. We could have proven that sea
serpents really do exist. Those things are real. . ."

Since their initial sighting in May, 1972, the two
divers have prowled the shoreline along St. Alban's
Bay. "We've never even had a ripple," admitted
Shanafelt. "We know the thing exists. And if you talk
to some of the old fishermen up here, get them on
friendly terms, some will talk about it. A few will
even admit to having seen the thing while they've
been out on the lake. Most don't talk much about it.
They sure don't go running to the newspapers when
they've seen it."

What happens when you tell your friends that
ou've encountered a sea serpent or lake monster?

"The guys at work really ran a number down on
me," reported Morris Lucia. "I'm a tire salesman. I
wished I hadn't mentioned it at the store. The people
there liked to have never stopped kidding me. If I was
drinking coffee or a Coke, they'd say something
about being careful about the sea snakes. One of the
girls in the office took the clippings in the newspaper
and made up a cute little sea serpent frame. I didn't
mind that but the constant kidding got on my nerves."

Do they expect to find and perhaps someday
photograph the monster?

Fred Shanafelt laughed. "I figure we've got about
as much of a chance as the Spaniards had in finding
the seven cities of gold."

"But if we did," added Morris Lucia, "think of
what you could sell those pictures for – maybe even
a hundred thousand dollars. We've invested in good
underwater cameras and cases and we've bought a
nice movie camera. We have everything we need –
except another two minutes with the lake monster."

Vermont Life, the publication edited by Walter
Hard when he sighted the Lake Champlain monster,
published a monster hunter's guideline in their
Spring, 1962, issue. The magazine reported:

"With the break-up of the ice, the famous lake
monster is due to be sighted again soon. He was
spotted at least four times last year between Shel-
burne Harbor and North Hero – and by reliable
couples . . . *Tips on sighting the monster:* Keep a
lookout in late afternoon, especially in rocky, fairly
shallow areas 100 yards or so offshore. First hint may
be the noise of a huge body splashing. When alerted
the monster(s) will move off at speeds estimated at
10 to 15 miles per hour toward deep water."

Even further north of Vermont is the tiny com-

munity of Redwood, on Highway 37, near Alexandria Bay, New York. This region, dotted with many small fresh-water lakes, includes one called Lake of the Woods. About forty years ago, a young woman was fishing on the lake one morning with her mother. The two women were casting for bass when the young lady looked over and noticed that her mother's line was taut and jerking.

"I was waiting for her to set the hook and reel the fish in," the lady reported several years later. "When she didn't, I looked up to see what was wrong. She was staring with widened eyes at something in back of me. When I looked around, I saw the most fantastic creature you can imagine.

"We didn't waste a minute in pulling up our anchor and heading for shore," the witness said later in a sworn affidavit. "The shore was about one hundred feet and it seemed to take forever to get there. It was very close to our boat. Both of us had the same fear that the thing might upset our boat. We didn't speak – not even in a whisper – until we were standing on the dock. Then our true reaction set in to the whole experience. We could not believe that we'd seen such a creature. This water thing was about twenty feet long – at least that's all we could make out on an estimate. The color was grayish tan. The head was not much larger than the neck or body. The water creature was staring at us and there were three arcs – or perhaps we should say protuberances – that were visible on the head. When we started rowing toward the dock, the creature submerged and caused the ordinarily calm surface of the lake to become quite agitated."

During the past hundred years there have been other reports of similar creatures sighted in this region. Several fishermen have given detailed affidavits on their encounters with the bizarre behemoths.

From the junglelike Everglades of Florida to the cool, fresh-water lakes of the Arctic Circle, reports have been compiled on numerous aquatic "horrors." However, many of these sightings fall into the northern boreal forests or an extension of these high altitude mountains. There have been many reports from large, cool bodies of water in the Adirondacks, the mountains of the West Coast and the Canadian and American Rocky Mountains. Author and scientist Ivan T. Sanderson was a remarkable man, an enthusiastic monster hunter who loved to chase down bizarre reports of strange creatures. Sanderson felt the real center for lake monsters on the North American continent was in the Canadian Rockies. He included the extension of mountains that come down into Idaho, Washington, and Montana.

"There are scores of lakes in this area with myths about fresh-water lake monsters," Sanderson said before his death. "The American Indians have legends about these great water creatures. Some of these legends are backed up by recent Indian and white man's sightings. A half dozen or so of these lakes have traditions that are very similar to the Loch Ness type of creature."

Sanderson pointed to the *Ogopogo* as one of the best known of the North American lake monsters. Its fame is due to its remarkable documentation by eyewitnesses. The *Ogopogo* has been sighted by tourists and local residents around Lake Okanagan in British Columbia, Canada. Lawmen have received hundreds of reports during the past couple of decades. These reports often agree in their descriptions of a water creature with a frightening head atop a long neck. The animal is said to have a shining brownish black body that is barrel-shaped. Several sighters have reported the presence of large black flippers. Others have said the creature has both flippers and legs.

Local residents are unsure whether there is a sin beastie in the lake, or whether a family of creature being sighted. *The Vernon News*, a local newspap has compiled many of these reports into a fourte page booklet. The headlines in the booklet are int esting because of the groups of people who ha witnessed the creature playfully swimming in t eighty-mile-long lake. Headings include:

- Seven Women Watch Lake Creature
- Bus Passengers see monster
- Crowd of Watchers. . .
- Five Persons See. . .

In recent years, Lake Okanagan has become crowded tourist attraction. Fishermen say the lake a marvelous spot for catching their daily limit Vacationing families bring their travel trailers an motor boats for idyllic weekends on the lake. Despit these noisy activities on the surface, the *Ogopogo* seems undisturbed. He continues to be seen with increasing frequency.

Other lakes in the region also have legends of lak monsters. The Indians claim that *Ta-Zam-a*, another long-necked lake creature, splashes around in the waters of Lake Sushwap. Another lake said to contain a long-necker is Cowichan; Indians refer to this creature as the *Tsinquaw*. Both of these British Columbia lakes are fairly remote, but people are starting to press in on their shores.

In the United States, we find two lakes in Montana lodging alleged long-neckers. Local residents claim the "Oggle-Boogles" inhabit Lake Waterton and Lake Flathead in that state. The Oggle-Boogles have been sighted in a number of sizes ranging from five or six feet in length up to a frightening sixty to eighty feet. This may indicate the existence of baby lake monsters in these waters.

A.G. Baalim, a businessman from Lethbridge,

Montana, had a cabin on Lake Waterton for many years. Baalim observed a long-necker that was estimated to be forty feet in length, with two "horns or tentacles" protruding from the head. Boat captains Slim Udahl and Ron Boyce also reported sighting the lake creatures in different years. Their creature was approximately four inches in diameter with eight-inch prongs projecting up from its back.

Zoologists claimed the creatures seen by Udahl and Boyce were probably eels. Whatever the creature was, it doesn't fit into the usual pattern for long-neckers in Payette Lake in Idaho. The Unidentified Swimming Object was described as having a head like "a cow or horse" atop a slender, fairly lengthy neck. The creature was reported to have several humps on its back. Eyewitnesses claimed the Lake Payette monster moved through the water with an undulating motion, creating a series of fairly large waves.

Newspapers in the towns near Lake Payette published several reports during the past fifteen years about sightings. Several groups of people have witnessed the creature at fairly close distance. These crowds included several prominent hunters and fishermen in that region. The Lake Payette lake monster differs from other long-neckers by being described as orangish or yellowish in color.

Before we assume the long-neckers are a rarity, we should check the reports from all over the world. Indians, Eskimos and U.S. Air Force pilots have reported seeing a monstrous creature in Lake Iliamna, Alaska. Several Alaskan and state-side "monster hunters" have tried to catch whatever beastie lurks in these chilly waters. To date, their efforts have been unsuccessful. Swedish boaters have been startled to see a long-necked, horse-headed creature come popping up from the depths of several lakes in that country. The Swedish reports go back several hundred

years. While the Loch Ness monster has received world-wide publicity, similar creatures have been reported in other lochs. One or more of the animals have been seen in Lochs Quoich, Shiel, Locky, Morar, and Lemond, with a family of creatures believed to be in Loch Morar.

Even the Irish have reported something swimming in their lakes. For several hundreds of years, Irishmen have seen long-neckers in the craggy upland lakes south of Dublin. Reports have also filtered in from Loughs Bran, Cleevuun, Dub, Mask, Glenda-lough, and Bray. These sightings have been investigated by F.W. Holiday, a British geologist, who theorized that the long-neckers are the source of the Celtic legends about the "Great Orme" (or worm) of ancient times. The ancient Gaulic god, Cernunnos, was depicted as being accompanied by a ram-headed serpent. Other relics show serpents with ram, horse and cowlike heads.

The Russians have also come up with their version of the lake monster. Unlike most reports from around the world, the creature in Siberia's Lake Vorota appears hostile to humans and animals. A United Press International news story said the monster was spherical in shape and quite horrible to view. The Lake Vorota monster had allegedly consumed a dog that was swimming in the lake, a reindeer who fell into the waters, and an undetermined number of humans.

Viktor Tverdokhlebov, a Russian geologist, told newsmen that he was swimming in Lake Labynikir, near Lake Vorota. The encounter occurred in 1952 and the Russian geologist admitted being unnerved by the ferocious nature of the serpentlike creature.

"It was an ominous-looking dark gray sphere that showed just above the water," he told newsmen. "It resembled an oversized, glistening tin barrel with a

fanted horn rudder on its back. There were two bulging protrusions that must have been eyes approximately seven feet apart on the head.

"The creature reached the bank, stopped, and then went into a series of convulsions which raised waves and fountains of water as it disappeared below. There was no question about the monster's intentions. It was heading straight for us and only when the ripple of water it had stirred reached our feet was its terrible hypnotic spell broken. We were able to flee the water and escape not a moment too soon!"

Viktor Tverdokhlebov and many other sighters of lake monsters have mentioned the creature's undulating or up-and-down movements. This seems to be a universal method of locomotion for long-neckers. A scientist at the University of Iowa reported on the significance of the undulating movement. "Mammals such as whales and seals move along in an up-and-down or humping fashion," he explained. "Snakes propell themselves with a side-to-side motion. It would appear that these so-called lake monsters or sea serpents, if they do exist, are a mammal. The method of movement puts them entirely outside the reptile family."

Reports of an undulating water creature in the Paint River in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan were mentioned by Dr. Ivan T. Sanderson several years ago. A woman reported in an affidavit that she was walking along the river in 1922 in Iron County. She planned to visit a friend who lived near the river. The girl was walking down a hill while a Mrs. Johnson was approaching her on a small knoll.

"We got a very good look at this animal," the report stated. "Both saw it at the same time. We stood stunned and speechless, watching it until it went out of sight. Mrs. Johnson asked in Swedish: 'Did you see what I saw?' I told her that I did. She

went on talking in Swedish, becoming very excited and saying, the creature had a head larger than a pail.

Mrs. Johnson made the young girl walk back up the hill. "I had to verify everything to my mother," the affidavit went on. "My version agreed with that of Mrs. Johnson. The creature did have a head larger than a bucket. It was actually much larger than any pail I knew. The head stood straight above the water. The body was a dark color. The body did not move like that of a snake but in an undulating motion. We could see humps sticking out of the water, and I recall counting six of them. How long? This is difficult to remember. It was swimming north in the river between two bridges. The distance could be the length of a city block and the monster must have been half that distance in length. It submerged under the bridge, but we followed the wake on up the river."

Less than two hundred miles from New York City, Lyons Falls is located in the Adirondack Mountains of New York. In 1951, Wash Mellick was fishing from a small boat on the Black River. Suddenly, a huge animal popped up out of the water. The creature was not more than twenty-five feet from Mellick's boat. An employee of a local paper mill, Mellick told newsmen the creature was about fifteen feet long.

"It was dark brown in color and had a round, tapered body," Mellick said. "It had fins like two hands, and its eyes stuck out like silver dollars. I threw stones at it but it only stared at me."

Newspaper stories tell of a search being launched for the creature.

A wire service reported: "A search party tried to capture the creature. The searchers consisted of college professors, a State Conservation officer, and two science students.

"Old-time residents looked wise today and said

they could have told the group of scientists that the monster lurking in the Black River can't be caught in a fish net. The monster has been reported seen in this isolated section of northern New York three times in the past ten years, but always when there was an electrical storm in progress."

Another river monster, a creature with a different appearance, may live in the Nith River near New Hamburg, Ontario, Canada. Several years ago, newspapers headlined this story from New Hamburg:

"Police Chief George Thomas vowed today he would get the slimy, three-toed monster that is stalking his town's streets by night. Thomas said it hasn't done any harm yet, but he's going to shoot it on sight if he sees it again. After the Chief reported seeing the lizardlike creature last Saturday, it turned out the thing has been around for three years without anybody making a fuss.

"More than twenty witnesses, including the Town Clerk and Treasurer, Clayton Ingold, admitted they had, in some cases, seen the monster as long ago as three years. They said they didn't want to mention it to anyone.

" 'Our people are religious, quiet folks, and they wouldn't want people to accuse them of drinking,' said Police Chief Thomas."

The New Hamburg monster was said to be about fifty pounds in size and have four legs; it left a three-toed track. The creature was believed to have come into the town from the river. Chief Thomas got a shot off at the monster once, missed and saw the "thing" slither back into the river.

Indian mythology indicates these strange lake and river monsters have been around for hundreds of years. Indians of the Northwestern states called a monstrous water dragon by the name of *Tlenamaw*. The Chippewa tribe was familiar with a water monster,

Waktcexi. Even out on the desert, the Navajo Indians knew about a *Tieholtsodi,* the dreaded water monster. The Cherokee tribe referred to the Great Water Serpent as *Uktena.*

Although humanity has conquered space travel, we know very little about our planet. A hundred years ago the United States had a frontier; many regions had yet to be mapped and surveyed. There continue to be areas in northern California – vast stretches of mountainous land – where no man has yet walked.

Although we have progressed into a technological society, we know relatively little about our lakes and oceans. All sorts of supposedly mythical creatures may exist in the depths. With new, high-speed film, modern cameras and other equipment, we may yet find that Nessie, lake monsters and sea serpents are the last of their lines from some prehistoric age.

Chapter VIII

SEA SERPENTS: LEGEND OR FACT?

The enigmatic monster of the oceans – the puzzling sea serpent – may well be linked to lake monsters. Some investigators have speculated that Nessie of Loch Ness fame is a fresh-water cousin of the salt-water sea serpent. They theorize that lake monsters became trapped in the lakes during a vast earth upheaval in the past. As with the Loch Ness creature, our investigator of sea serpents must depend upon eyewitness accounts. There is little factual evidence that points conclusively to the existence of these creatures.

The first mention of a sea serpent came from Olaus Magnus, archbishop of Upsala, and the author of *A Compendious History of the Goths, Swedes, and Vandals, and Other Northern Nations* (London; 1558). Magnus wrote:

". . . Those who in works of navigation, on the coasts of Norway, employ themselves in fishing or merchandise, do all agree in this strange story, that there is a serpent there which is of vast magnitude, namely two hundred feet long, and moreover twenty feet thick; and it is wont to live in caves and rocks

toward the sea-coast about Bergen; which will go alone from his holes in a clear night, in Summer, and devour Calves, Lambs, and Hogs, or else he will go into the sea to feed on Polypus, Locusts, and all sorts of sea crabs. He hath commonly hair hanging from his neck a Cubit long, and sharp scales, and is black, and he hath flaming shining eyes. This snake disquiets the shippers, and he puts up his head on high like a pillar, and catcheth away men, and he devours them; and this hapneth not, but it signifies some wonderful change of the Kingdom near at hand, namely that the Princes shall die, or be banished, or some Tumultuous Wars shall presently follow."

At the time he wrote these words, Olaus Magnus was living in exile in Rome due to revolution in Scandinavia against King Christian II. The king had been accused of tyranny by his subjects and been forced to flee his throne and seek refuge with his cousin, Charles V of Germany. The quote by Magnus that sea serpents bring ill fortune was possibly due to the political climate at that time.

Magnus also told of a lake monster that appeared and supposedly led to King Christian being exiled. He related:

". . . There is also a serpent of incredible magnitude in a town called Moos in the diocese of Hammer, which as a Comet portends a change for all the world, so, that portends a change in the Kingdom of Norway, as it were seen, Anno 1522, that lifts himself high above the waters, and rouls himself round like a sphere. This Serpent was thought to be fifty Cubits long by conjecture, by sight afar off: There followed the banishment of King Christiernus, and a great persecution of the Bishops; and it shew'd also the destruction of the Country."

Magnus may have thought his exile was due to the beastie's appearance because of Biblical comments

on such creatures. In the Old Testament, we discover that King David's 104th Psalm talks about the Mediterranean Sea as a "great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both great and small beasts. There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein."

The leviathan (which translates as "torturous" or "terrible monster" from the original Hebrew) was also mentioned at some length in the Book of Job. It reads:

". . . Canst thou draw out leviathan with a hook? . . . I will not conceal his parts, nor his power, nor his comely porportions. . . Who can open the doors of his face? His teeth are terrible round about. His scales are his pride, shut up together as with a close seal. One is so near to another, that no air can come between them. They are joined one to another, they stick together, that they cannot be sundered. By his sneezings a light doth shine, and his eyes are like the eyelids of morning. Out of his mouth go burning lamps and sparks of fire leap out. Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, as out of a seething cauldron. His breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth. In his neck remaineth strength, and sorrow is turned to joy before him. The flakes of his flesh are joined together; they are firm in themselves and they cannot be moved. His heart is as firm as a stone: yes, as hard as a piece of millstone. When he raiseth up himself, the mighty are frightened; by reason of breakings they purify themselves. The sword of those that layeth at him cannot hold: the spear, the dart nor the habergeon (*a coat of mail*). He esteemeth iron as hay and brass as rotting wood. The arrow cannot make him flee: sling stones are turned with him into stubble. Darts are counted as stubble: he laugheth at the threat of a spear. . . He maketh the deep boil like a pot: he maketh the sea like a pot of ointment. He

maketh a path to shine after him; one would think the deep was hoary. Upon earth there is not his like, one who is made without fear. He beholdeth all things: he is king over the children of pride."

Biblical scholars have puzzled for centuries over what the leviathan might have been. Some speculated the creature mentioned in the Book of Job was a crocodile; others that the beastie was a large water snake. As the Christian religion associates Satan and evil with the serpent, it is little wonder that Olaus Magnus believed their appearance forecast disaster.

Olaus Magnus was ridiculed because he had included the sea serpent in his manuscript. Since then, scholars have labeled his work as suspect owing to inadequate knowledge of his subject. However, sea serpents continued to make up a growing portion of Scandinavian literature. *Upon the Fruitful Splendors of Denmark and Norway* by Arndt Berntsen was published in 1656, citing the belief that sea serpents had been encountered by small sailing vessels. These crafts were said to have been attacked at times by the serpents; several had been sunk. Adam Olearius was a collector of curious legends and beliefs for the Duke of Holstein. He catalogued many of these stories in *Gottorffische Kunst-Kammer* in 1666, also noting reports about sea serpents. He said:

". . . That this is true has not long ago been confirmed by a Swedish nobleman at Gottorf, who declared to have heard from the Burgomaster of Malmo, a trustworthy man, that, whilst standing on a hill on the Norwegian coast, he saw in the calm water a large serpent, which seen from afar, had the thickness of a wine barrel and 35 windings. These serpents are said to appear on the surface of the water only in calm weather and at certain times."

In *Nori Regnum,* a fascinating history of old Norway, historian Jonas Ramus said that a large sea

snake was seen by several people near the town of Dramsforden. "And at one time by eleven people together," Ramus said in the 1689 first edition of his history. "It was in very calm weather; and so soon as the sun appeared, and the wind blew a little, it shot away just like a coiled cable, that is suddenly thrown out by the sailors; and they observed that it was sometime in stretching out its many folds."

The next sighting is considered a classic by many investigators due to the reputation of the man and his keen, observant nature. Hans Egede, a Protestant priest, was known as the Apostle of Greenland. A truthful and God-fearing man, he told of a serpentine sea monster in *A Description of Greenland,* published in an English edition in 1745. After describing several unusual forms of marine life, Egede said:

". . . As for other sea monsters: None of them have been seen by us, or any of Our Time, that ever I could hear, save that most dreadful Monster that showed itself upon the surface of the Water in the Year 1734 off our new Colony in 64 degrees.

"This Monster was of so huge a size, that coming out of the water, its head reached as high as the masthead; its body was as bulky as the ship, and three or four times as long. It had a long pointed Snout, and spouted like a Whale-fish; great broad paws, and the Body seemed covered with shell-work, its skin very rugged and uneven. The underpart of its body was shaped like an enormous huge serpent, and when it dived again under water, it plunged backwards into the sea, and so raised its tail aloft, which seemed a whole ship's length distant from the bulkiest part of its body."

The next cleric to become intrigued by Scandinavian sea serpents was Eric Ludvigsen Pontoppidan, Bishop of Bergen from 1747 to 1764. Like many of his predecessors, Bishop Pontoppidan was interested in

the natural history of the northland. He wrote *The Natural History of Norway,* published in 1752, and devoted a portion of his book to sea serpents.

The bishop's interest was aroused when members of his flock mentioned encountering the dreaded *sea-orm* (sea worm) while at sea. Bishop Pontoppidan also mentioned that dead sea serpents had been washed onto the shores of the island of Karmen, the decaying carcass creating a deadly stench for the villagers. Another dead serpent was said to have washed ashore near Amunds-Vaagen. This carcass had attracted several hundred sight-seers before the stench drove them away.

Bishop Pontoppidan told of a sighting made by Captain Lorenz von Ferry, who was sailing from Trondjjem to Molde along the coast of Norway in a small vessel. The weather was unusually hot, the ocean was calm and mirrorlike, and the wind had died down. Without wind, the sailors had started to row the ship toward their destination. Captain von Ferry was reading a book when another of the sea's Unknowns made an appearance. He explained in an affidavit that:

". . . I heard a kind of murmuring voice from the men at the oars, who were eight in number, and observed that the man at the helm kept off the land. Upon this I inquired what was the matter, and was informed that there was a sea serpent ahead of us. I then ordered the helmsman to keep the land again, and to come up with this creature of which I had heard so many stories. Though the fellows were under some apprehensions, they were obliged to obey my orders.

"In the meantime the sea-snake passed by us, and we were obliged to turn the vessel about in order to get nearer to it. As the snake swam faster than we could row, I took my gun, which was loaded with

small shot, and fired at it; on this it immediately plunged under water. We rowed to the place where it sank down (which in the calm might be easily observed) and lay upon our oars, thinking it would come up again to the surface; however, it did not. Where the snake plunged down, the water appeared red and thick; perhaps the small shot might have wounded it, the distance being very little.

"The head of this sea serpent, which it held more than two feet above the surface of the water, resembled that of a horse. It was of grayish color, and the mouth was quite black, and very large. It had large black eyes, and a long white mane, which hung down to the surface of the water. Besides the head and neck, we saw seven or eight folds, or coils of this snake, which were very thick, and as far as we could guess there was a fathom's distance between each fold.

"I related this affair to a certain company, where there was a person of distinction present, who desired that I would communicate to him an authentic detail of all that happened; and for this reason two of my sailors who were present at the time and place where I saw this monster, Neils Petersen Kopper, and Neils Neilsen Anglewigen, will appear in court, to declare on oath that this is the truth of every particular herein set forth; and I desire the favor of an attested copy of the said description. L. von Ferry, Bergen, 21st February, 1751."

How long was the serpent? According to their best judgment, Captain von Ferry and his crewmen made an estimate of six hundred feet! Bishop Pontoppidan did a thorough investigation of Scandinavian sea monsters and came up with these conclusions.

1. The creatures usually stayed in the lower depths of the ocean except during the months of July and August. At that time, they came to the surface for

spawning.

2. The creature would remain on the surface as long as the weather was calm. At the first sign of a storm, it went back to the depths.

3. The animal was "dark-brown in color, but it is speckled and variegated with light streaks or spots, that shine like tortoise-shell. It is a darker hue about the eyes and mouth than elsewhere."

4. ". . . About the neck is a kind of mane, which looks like a parcel of sea-weeds hanging down into the water."

5. The only instance of these creatures spouting water was related by Hans Egede, the Apostle of Greenland. Bishop Pontoppidan felt the animals he investigated differed from those mentioned by Egede.

6. He also felt the creature was a true snake that shed its skin.

Bishop Pontoppidan went on to comment on the habits of the sea serpent.

"I return again to the most interesting inquiry concerning them," he said. "Which is whether they do mankind any injury? And in what manner they may hurt the human species? Arndt Berntsen, in his account of the Fertility of Denmark and Norway, page 308, affirms that they do; and says, that the Sea-snake, as well as the Trold-whale, often sinks both men and boats. I have not heard any account of such an accident hereabouts, that might be depended upon; but the North traders inform me of what has frequently happened to them, namely that the Sea-snake has raised itself up, and thrown itself across a boat, and sometimes even a vessel of some hundreds tons burden, and by its weight has sunk it to the bottom. One of the aforesaid North traders, who says he has been near enough to some of these Sea-snakes (alive) to feel their smooth skin, informs me,

that sometimes they will raise up their frightening heads, and snap a man out of a boat, without hurting the rest: but I will not affirm this for truth, because it is not certain they are a fish of prey.

". . .It is sometimes said that they fling themselves in a wide circle around a boat, so that the men are surrounded on all sides. This Snake, I observed before, generally appears in the water in folds or coils; and the fishermen from a known custom in that case, never row towards the openings, or those places where the body is not to be seen, but is concealed under the water; if they did, the Snake would raise itself up, and overset the boat. On the contrary, they row full against the highest part that is visible, which makes the snake immediately dive and they are released from their fears.

". . . Of late, our fishermen have found the way, in the warm summer months, of providing themselves with castor (*castoreum* or musk), which they always carry with them when they go far out at sea: they shut it up in a hole in the stern, and if at any time they are particularly apprehensive of meeting with the Sea-snake, they throw a little of it overboard; for by frequent appearances they know of a certainty, that it always avoids the drug."

Bishop Pontoppidan's efforts to give credence to reports about sea serpents was largely a failure. In fact, mention of sea serpents at such length in his book led to a familiar charge of "unscholarly" by his critics. A sea serpent became something to be joked about; anyone reporting a sighting was ridiculed. Yet, even after Bishop Pontoppidan's book was published, continual sightings took place in Scandinavia. At least one report a year came in from someone who had encountered the creatures, either on the sea or in a fjord. The next man to look into these reports was Dr. J. Newmann, another Bishop at Bergen, who

inquired about the creatures for twenty-five years "among his clergy and those of the adjoining dioceses." A letter from J.F. Morries Stirling, a friend of Dr. Newmann, was published in the *Illustrated London News* (28, x., 1848) that gave more details on the serpents sighted in Norwegian waters. The letter said:

". . . The size of the Sea serpents in the Norwegian fjords varies much; and I do not now remember what the dimensions of the largest are said to be. . . There are, I believe, several varieties of the reptile known as the Sea-serpent, but almost all of the accounts agree to the existence of a *mane*, and as to the great size of the eye. In several of the fossil reptiles somewhat approaching the Sea-serpent in size and other characteristics, the orbit is very large and in this respect, as well as having short paws or flappers, the descriptions of the Northern Sea serpents agree with the supposed appearance of some of the antediluvian species. . .

"In concluding this hurried statement, allow me to add my own testimony as to the existence of a large fish or reptile of cylindrical form (I will not say Sea-serpent). Three years ago, while becalmed in a yacht between Bergen and Sogn, I saw at about a quarter of a mile astern, what appeared to be a large fish ruffling the otherwise smooth surface of the fjord, and, on looking attentively, I observed what looked like the convolutions of a snake.

"I immediately got my glass, and distinctly made out three convolutions, which drew themselves slowly through the water; the greatest diameter was ten or twelve inches. No head was visible, and from the size of each convolution I supposed the length to be about thirty feet. The master of my yacht, who as navigator, seaman, and fisherman, had known the Norwegian coast for many years, as well as a friend who was with me, an experienced Norwegian sportsman and porpoise shooter, saw the same appearance

at the same time, and formed the same opinion as to form and size. I mention the fact of my friend being a porpoise shooter, as many have believed that a shoal of porpoises following each other has given rise to the fable, as they call it, of the Sea-serpent."

The 1847 issues of *Zoologist Magazine,* London, made a report on another Scandinavian sighting that occurred near Molde, a small community on Romsdal Fjord. The statement is reproduced on page 1606 of that year's bound volumes. It reads:

"The 28th of July, 1845, J.C. Lund, bookseller and printer; G.S. Krogh, merchant; Christian Flang, Lund's apprentice, and John Elgenses, laborer, were out on Romsdal Fjord, fishing. The sea was, after a warm, sunshiny day, quite calm.

"About seven o'clock in the afternoon (sunset was at nine o'clock), a little distance from the shore, near the ballast place and Molde Hooe, they saw a long marine animal, which slowly moved itself forward, as it appeared to them, with the help of two fins, on the forepart of the body nearest the head, which they judged from the boiling of the water on both sides of it.

"The visible part of the body appeared to be between forty and fifty feet in length, and moved in undulations like a snake. The body was round, and of a dark color, and seemed to be several ells (An ell is a Norwegian measurement equal to around two feet) in thickness. As they discerned a waving motion in the water behind the animal, they concluded that part of the body was concealed under water. That it was one connected animal they saw plainly from its movement. When the animal was about one hundred yards from the boat, they noticed tolerably correctly its forepart which ended in a snout; its colossal head raised itself above the water in the form of a semicircle; the lower part was not visible. The

color of the head was dark brown and the skin smooth. They did not notice the eyes or any mane or bristles on the throat.

"When the serpent came about fifty yards distance, Lund fired at it, and was certain the shots hit it in the head. After the shot, he dived but came up immediately. He raised his neck in the air like a snake preparing to dart on his prey. After he had turned and got his body in a straight line, which he appeared to do with great difficulty, he darted like an arrow against the boat. They reached the shore, and the animal perceiving it had come into shallow water dived immediately and disappeared into the deep.

"Such is the declaration of these four men, and no one has cause to question their veracity, or imagine that they were so seized with fear that they could not have observed what took place so near to them. There are not many here, or on other parts of the Norwegian coast, who longer doubt the existence of a sea serpent. The writer of this narrative was a long time skeptical, as he had not been so fortunate as to see this monster of the deep, but after the many accounts he has read, and the relations he has received from credible witnesses, he does not dare longer to doubt the existence of the sea serpent. P.W. Deinboll, Molde, Nov. 29, 1845."

The Norse legends about the *kraken* is an example of science being several centuries behind folklore. Homer, Aristotle and Pliny were writing about a gigantic sea monster during the golden age of Greece. Homer's heroic Ulysses was warned by Circe of a many-tentacled sea monster that would bar his way to Erebus, the land of death. Olaus Magnus mentioned such "monster fish" in his *Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus* (Rome; 1555) creating the image of a giant, bearded fish with a horrible image. It took Bishop Pontoppidan's *Natural History of Norway* to

bring the *kraken* into proper focus.

"It is called *kraken, kraxen,* or as some name it, *krabben,*" wrote the bishop. ". . . This last name seems indeed best to describe this creature, which is round, flat, and full of arms, or branches. Others call it *Horven*, or *Sea-Horven*, and some *Anker-Trold*. Our fishermen unanimously affirm that when they row out several miles to Sea, particularly on a hot summer day, and by their situation expect to find 80 to 100 fathoms of water, it often happens that they do not find above 20 or 30, and sometimes less. At these places they generally find the greatest plenty of Fish, especially Cod and Ling. . . by this they judge that the *kraken* is at the bottom. They say this creature causes these unnatural shallows. . . .

"There are sometimes twenty boats or more got together, and throwing out their lines a moderate distance from each other; and the only thing they have to observe is whether the depth continues the same, which they know by their lines, or whether it grows shallower by their seeming to have less water. If this last be the case, they find that the *kraken* is raising himself near the surface. . . they immediately leave off fishing, take their oars and get away as fast as they can. When they have reached the usual depth of the place, and find themselves out of danger, they lie upon their oars, and in a few minutes after they see this enormous monster come up to the surface of the water; he there shows himself sufficiently, though his whole body does not appear, which in all likelihood no human eye ever beheld excepting those who are unfortunate.

"Its back or upper part, which seems to be in appearance about an English mile and a half in circumference (some say more, but I chose the last for greater certainty) looks at first like a number of small islands, surrounded with something that floats and

fluctuates like sea weeds. . . at last bright points or horns appear, which grow thicker the higher they rise above the surface of the water, and sometimes they stand up as high and as tall as the masts of middle-siz'd vessels.

"It seems these are the creature's arms, and, it is said, if they were to lay hold of the largest Man-of-War, they would pull it down to the bottom. After this monster has been on the surface of the water for a short time, it begins to sink again slowly, and then the danger is as great as before, because the motion of this sinking causes such a swell in the sea, and such an eddy or whirlpool, that it draws down everything with it. . . .

"As this enormous sea-animal in all probability may be reckon'd of the Polype or of the Star-fish kind. . . it seems that the parts which are seen rising at its pleasure, and are probably called arms, are properly the tentacles. . . . With these they move themselves, and likewise gather their food.

"Besides these, for this last purpose, the great Creator has also given this creature a strong and peculiar scent, which it can emit at certain times, and by means of which it beguiles and draws other fish to come in heaps to it. . . . a great many old fishermen observe that for some months the *kraken* is continually eating, and in other months he always avoids his excrements. During the evacuation the surface of the water is covered with the excrement, and appears quite thick and turbid. This muddiness is said to be very agreeable to the smell or taste of other fishes, or to both, that they gather together over the *kraken*: he then opens his arms, or horns, seizes and swallows his welcome guests.

". . . The *kraken* has never been known to do any great harm, except that they have taken away the lives of those who consequently could not bring the

tidings. I have never heard but one instance mentioned, which happened a few years ago. . . two fishermen accidentally, and to their great surprise, fell into such a spot of water, full of thick slime, almost like a morass. They immediately strove to get out of this place, but they had not time to turn quick enough to save themselves from one of the *kraken's* horns, which crushed the head of the boat so, that it was with great difficulty they saved their lives on the wreck, tho' the weather was as calm as possible."

What the bishop undoubtedly referred to was a giant squid. While the size of the creature was undoubtedly exaggerated by the sailors, we might conclude that giant squid travel in schools. Small squid are known to move together, rising and dropping in depth as well. The squid is a member of the cephalopod family, which consists of the octopus, cuttlefish and, of course, the squid. Shaped somewhat like a torpedo with thick arms and lengthy tentacles, the squid can maneuver quite rapidly in the open sea.

While skeptical scientists wrote that giant squids could not exist, seamen continued to make a series of lengthy reports about "something" large and unbelievable in the sea. A number of giant squid were washed ashore on the coast of Newfoundland in the three decades between 1870 and 1900. One of the most incredible stories of a giant squid (*Architeuthis*) took place a few miles offshore from Connemara, Ireland, and remains of the animal were sent to the Royal Society of Dublin for study. Sergeant Tom O'Connor of the Royal Irish Constabulary made this report:

"On April 25, the crew of a curragh, consisting of three men, met with a strange adventure northwest of Boffin Island. Having shot their spillets, they observed to seaward a great floating mass, surrounded by gulls; they pulled out, believing it to be a wreck, but to

their great astonishment, found it to be a cuttle-fish of enormous proportions, and lying perfectly still, as if basking on the surface of the water. A knife was the only weapon on board. The cuttle is much prized as bait for course fish, and the crew resolved to secure at least a portion of it. Considering the great size of the monster, and knowing the crushing and holding power of the arms, open hostility could not be resorted to, and the fishermen shaped their tactics differently. Paddling up with great caution, a single arm was suddenly seized and lopped off.

"The cuttle, hitherto at rest, became dangerously active now, and set out to sea at full speed in a cloud of spray, rushing through the water at a tremendous rate. The canoe immediately gave chase, and was up again with the enemy after three-quarters of a mile. Hanging on the rear of the fish, a single arm was attacked in turn, while it took all of the skill of the men to stay out of the way of the deadly suckers. . . The battle thus continued for two hours. . . by this time the prize was partially subdued. . . such as remained of the ten great arms slashed through the air and water in a most dangerous but unavailing fashion. The trunk of the fish lay alongside, fully as long as the canoe. . . . The head was at last severed from the body, which was unmanageable from its great weight, and sank like lead to the bottom of the sea."

The portions of the fish that were brought ashore were gigantic. Two of the large arms extended to eight feet in length, measuring fifteen inches in diameter. The two tentacles the fishermen brought to shore were thirty feet long, the mandibles measuring more than four inches across. The head weighed six stone, or about eighty-four pounds. The eyes of the creature were fifteen inches in diameter.

Giant squid and sperm whales appear to be natural enemies. In the habit of feasting on squid, the sperm

whale has engaged in some ferocious battles with the giant monsters of the depth. Frank Bullen sailed on a whaling ship when he was a young man of eighteen years old, writing of his experiences in *The Cruise of the Cachalot* which was published in London in 1898. He told of watching a gigantic battle one night while at sea. Hearing a noise off the side of his ship, Bullen grabbed a pair of night glasses and watched a whale battle a cuttlefish or squid by light of the moon.

"I saw a very large sperm whale. . . locked in deadly combat with a cuttlefish or squid, almost as large as himself," Bullen related. "Those interminable tentacles seemed to enlace the whole of his great body. The head of the whale seemed a perfect network for the writhing arms – naturally, I suppose, for it appeared as if the whale had the tail part of the mollusc in his jaws, and, in a businesslike manner, was sawing through it. By the side of the black columnar head of the whale appeared the head of the great squid, as awful an object as one could well imagine, even in a fevered dream. Judging as carefully as possible, I estimated it to be at least as large as one of our pipes, which contained three hundred and fifty gallons; but it may have been, and probably was, a good deal larger. The eyes were very remarkable from their size and blackness which, contrasted with the livid whiteness of the head, made their appearance all the more striking. They were, at least, a foot in diameter, and, seen under such conditions, looked decidedly eerie and hobgoblinlike. All round the combatants were numerous sharks, like jackals round a lion, ready to share the feast, and apparently assisting in the destruction of the huge cephalopod."

As time passed, whalers began to find evidance that was acceptable to scientific groups. Pieces of squid arms were often found in the bellies of captured whales. One specimen was twenty-eight feet long, the

diameter of a large tree. Another squid arm measured forty-five feet and an incredible thirty inches in diameter.

Other reports came in and the giant squid has been generally accepted by the experts. Frank W. Lane in his notable *Kingdom of the Octopus* (New York, Pyramid, 1962) told of his belief that cephalopods have killed unwary seamen and dragged small boats to the bottom of the sea.

In the late nineteen twenties, newspapers told of a squid of about ten or twelve feet in length being tossed on the deck of the steamship *Caronia* during a storm. The monster grabbed a seaman by the leg and, assisted by his mates, the unfortunate sailor spent several minutes subduing the creature. During World War II, survivors of the *Britannia* troopship sinking were huddled on a floating piece of wreckage. Suddenly, a deadly tentacle reached up out of the sea, fastened itself around a soldier, and pulled him into the murky depths.

To date, evidence of a squid more than sixty feet in length has not been obtained. However, reports of giant *kraken* indicate that something huge and unbelievable occasionally pops up on the ocean's surface. In 1874, newspapers told of the steamship *Strathowen* sighting a small schooner, *The Pearl*, drifting on a calm sea. Suddenly, the captain of the steamer was astonished to see a gigantic squid rise up out of the depths, encircle the schooner with its tentacles, and plunge the ship down into the sea.

The captain of *The Pearl* leaped off his ship a scant second before the craft went under. He was rescued by the *Strathowen*, visibly shaken by the horrific experience.

"My schooner was becalmed when the wind vanished," the captain told newsmen after he reached shore. "While we waited for wind, my crewmen and I

watched a battle between a giant squid and a sperm whale take place some distance from the ship."

When the two struggling monsters vanished, the captain was turning into the cabin when he noticed a huge, monstrous form in the water a half mile away. "It was an enormous squid," he said, "and it was at least a hundred feet long. Perhaps longer! I couldn't believe that any creature could be that large. With my ship unable to move without wind, I became disturbed when the squid moved closer. I had one of the seamen run to the cabin and bring up a rifle. This was the only weapon we had on board. The monster kept coming closer. I took careful aim and put a shot into the monster's head, hitting it in the eye. That's when it became enraged, came speeding at us with lightning speed, rammed *The Pearl* and then tied those tentacles around the ship. There was nothing we could do and, just before she went under, I leaped overboard into the water."

In time, we will probably find that Bishop Pontoppidan's stories about sea serpents will also be verified. The legendary *kraken*, while not a mile and a half in size, can certainly be matched up to the remains of giant squid that have been found. Interestingly, the fluid ejected by the squid emits a musk-like scent that can be compared to the castor used by the Norwegian sailors to chase away sea serpents. As the giant squid and sperm whale are enemies, we may find the sea serpent is preyed upon by the squid.

Chapter IX

NEW ENGLAND'S SUMMER OF THE SEA SERPENTS

The leaden sky over northeastern New England had cleared during the morning of July 28, 1802. By noon, a glowing summer sun vanquished the possibility of bad weather. As a dinner bell tolled on a distant farm, Rev. Abraham Cummings walked resolutely across the pier in the harbor at Long Island, Maine. His cheerful eyes squinted across the tranquil sea toward the Maine coast. A short, stocky man with mutton-chop whiskers, Rev. Cummings was pleased by the change in weather.

Rev. Abraham Cummings was a circuit rider, a member of that hearty band of colonial preachers who brought religion to the boondocks of the struggling new nation. He served several isolated churches on the islands off the Maine coast. During his week-long stay on Long Island, Rev. Cummings had preached each night in the village schoolhouse, which also served as the islanders' church.

After lunch at a parishioner's home, Rev. Cummings set sail for the mainland. He was accompanied by his wife, their eighteen-year-old daughter and a sixteen-

year-old girl from the island who planned to visit relatives in Portland.

The boat had barely sailed out of the harbor when Mrs. Cummings noticed something moving in the sea near their boat.

"What's that?" she asked, pointing toward the disturbance.

Abraham Cummings glanced in the direction of his wife's pointing finger. "A shoal of fish," he said. "That looks like a seal leading them."

Marjorie Cummings, their daughter, looked over the side of the boat. "Papa! That's no seal. They don't swim that high out of the water," she protested.

"Hush, Marjorie," Rev. Cummings whispered. "I'll move the boat closer for a better look."

The young girl from Long Island gasped. "Don't get too close," she pleaded. "That's the serpent we've been telling you about."

As Rev. Abraham Cummings was a respected man of God, his sighting of a sea serpent off the coast of Maine is judged one of the most authentic in colonial America. Even the most skeptical scientist realized that Cummings would not intentionally lie about such an encounter. After Rev. Cummings related his sighting to a fellow minister, he was encouraged to send a report to the newly organized American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Perhaps disturbed by the subject of the clergyman's letter, an official of the academy stuffed the report in a drawer. It was eighteen years before the letter was found and published. The report was as follows:

"It was July, 1802, that we saw this extraordinary sea monster on our passage to Belfast, between Cape Rosoi and Long Island. His first appearance was near Long Island. I then supposed it to be a large shoal of fish with a seal at one end of it, but wondered that the seal should rise out of the water so much higher

than usual; but as he drew nearer to our boat, we soon discovered that this whole appearance was but one animal in the form of a serpent. I immediately perceived that his mode of swimming was exactly as had been described to me by some of the people of the Fox Islands, who had seen an animal of this kind before, which must confirm the veracity of their report. For this creature had not a horizontal, but an ascending and descending serpentine motion. This renders it highly probable that he never moves on land to any considerable distance and that the water is his proper element. His head was rather larger than that of a horse, but formed like that of a serpent. His body we judged was more than sixty feet in length. His head and as much of his body as we could discover was all of a blue color except for a black circle around his eye. His motion was at first but moderate, but when he left us and proceeded towards the ocean, he moved with greater rapidity."

Several people suggested to the clergyman that he had sighted a school of porpoises swimming in follow-the-leader fashion.

"Nonsense," exclaimed the minister. "Who ever saw fifty or sixty porpoises moving after each other in a right line, and in such a manner that those who formed the rear were no larger than haddock or mackerel, and none but the foremost showed his head? Who ever saw a serpent's head upon a porpoise or a whale? We saw him swim as far from Long Island to the Cape before he disappeared. His head and neck all the time out of the water. Now who ever saw a porpoise swim such a great distance without emerging at all?"

Rev. Cummings was interviewed by several scientists. Their questions focused around the ascending and descending motion of the serpentine creature.

"I'm not certain if the motion was ascending and descending," admitted Rev. Cummings. "But there were three other people in the boat with me. All of them observed the creature for some time. The serpent's motion appeared to be ascending and descending to all of us. That is how we perceived it. However, while we did not see it, his motion might well have been horizontal."

While Rev. Cummings' sighting was not the first for the newly formed United States, it was certainly one of the most authenticated. Perhaps the first report from the U.S. was written by naturalist John Josselyn in his *An Account of Two Voyages to New England*, published in London in 1674.

During his visits to the New World, Josselyn was told of the sighting of a sea serpent by an unnamed group of explorers. He wrote: ". . . They told me of a sea serpent or snake that was coiled on a rock at Cape Ann. . . . A boat passed by with Englishmen on board with two Indians. . . . The Englishmen would have shot the serpent, but the Indians warned them, saying that if he was not killed outright, they would all be in danger of their lives."

A flurry of sightings of these serpentine creatures took place along the eastern coastal region of the United States from 1780 until 1850. A researcher digging into musty old files would be astonished to discover that our forefathers accepted the reality of sea serpents existing along the coast. It seems that these unusual animals discovered a favorable environment in the North Atlantic waters. They were reported as far north as Newfoundland, as far south as northern Florida. Several reports were centered in the region of Cape Hatteras. One English author skeptically observed that sea serpents were seldom reported by anyone other than Americans. "Nor has the animal ever been seen before or since except by Americans,"

he wrote with evident sarcasm. "They have much better eyes than Europeans can boast of."

The majority of the early sightings were in the coastal waters off New England. From this distance in time we can only speculate about this influx of sea serpents in that area. Perhaps these strange oceanic beasts had always lived in those waters. The cool temperature of the ocean in that region, the abundance of food, and a lack of human population might account for their increased numbers. Another reason for the sightings is that the New England states were the first to be settled in colonial times. As *homo sapiens* moved into New England, there were simply more people to observe the creatures swimming along in what may have been their natural breeding area.

One of the most authentic reports took place during the Revolutionary War. The sighters were two respected American naval heroes, Commodore Edward Preble and Commander John Foster Williams. Both men served with honor and distinction during the revolution. Author James Fenimore Cooper told of their sighting in *Lives of Distinguished American Naval Officers.* Their encounter with a serpent took place during a combat foray against a British naval force that was holed up in Penobscot Bay, Maine. During the start of their engagement against the British, Edward Preble was a young ensign serving on the *Protector.* The captain of the well-armed, twenty-six-gun vessel was John Foster Williams.

Cooper wrote:

". . . It was while thus employed that an incident occurred to Preble that is worthy of being recorded, more especially since subsequent events have confirmed its truth. Preble related the affair substantially as follows: The *Protector* was lying in one of the bays on the eastern coast, which has been forgotten, waiting the slow movement of the squadron. The day was

clear and calm, when a large serpent was discovered outside the ship. The animal was lying on the surface of the water quite motionless. After inspecting it with glasses for some time, Captain Williams ordered Preble to man and arm a boat. Preble was to endeavor to destroy the creature, or at least go as near to it as he could. The boat thus employed carried twelve oars and had a swivel in its bow, besides having the crew armed as boarders. As the boat neared it, the serpent raised its head about ten feet above the surface of the water, looking about it. It then began to move slowly away from the boat. Preble pushed on, his men pulling with all their force, and the animal being at no great distance, the swivel was discharged loaded with bullets. The discharge produced no other effect than to quicken the speed of the monster, which soon ran out of sight of the boat.

"There is no question in after-life, Preble occasionally mentioned this circumstance to a few of his intimates. He was not loquacious, and probably saw he was relating a fact that most people would be disposed to doubt, and self-respect prevented his making frequent allusions to it. When it is remembered that Preble died long before the accounts of the appearance of a similar serpent, that have been promulgated in this country, were brought to light, it affords a singular confirmation of the latter. Preble stated it as his opinion that the serpent he saw was from one hundred to one hundred and fifty feet long and larger (*in diameter*) than a barrel."

Possibly intrigued by Preble's story, Cooper found another naval officer who told of an encounter with a strange oceanic monster. "He reported on that occasion the serpent was seen quite near by, for fully an hour," Cooper recorded. "Once, it was viewed under water, as it passed beneath the boat. The writer's informant said it was his opinion that the

animal was nearer one hundred and fifty feet rather than one hundred feet in length, and he supposed it to be the diameter of a wind-pipe."

Cooper went on to reflect on these reports. "There appears to be an indisposition in the human mind to acknowledge that others have seen that which chance has concealed from our sight," he stated. "Travelers are discredited and derided merely because they relate facts that lie beyond the circle of common acquisition; and the term 'travelers' stories' has its real origin more in a narrow jealousy than in any prudent wariness of exaggeration."

An official report on another colonial sighting took place in May, 1780, when Captain George Little was commander of the frigate *Boston*, on a voyage between Penobscot and Portland, Maine. The sighting took place near Round Pond in Broad Bay. Captain Little stated that he was walking on deck shortly after sunrise when he spotted a sea serpent swimming down the bay.

"Our cutter was manned and armed," said Captain Little in his report. "I went myself in the boat and proceeded after the serpent. When within a hundred feet of the monster, the mariners were ordered to open fire. But before they could make ready, the serpent dove. He was not less than forty-five to fifty feet in length. The largest diameter of his body I would judge to be fifteen inches. His head was nearly the size of that of a man, which he carried four or five feet above the water. He wore every appearance of a common black snake."

Other sightings took place in Penobscot Bay. Several bathers were astonished to see a serpentine creature off the shore of Fox Island a few years after Captain Little's sighting. They judged the serpent to be from fifty to sixty feet in length, describing a creature similar to that mentioned in the Little report.

Most of the observers felt the beast moved with an "ascending and descending motion."

Several of these earlier reports tell of two or more sea serpents swimming together. Most of these eyewitnesses claimed there were a large and small serpent, indicating they believed the larger beast was acting as a parent to the smaller animal. An unnamed witness was mentioned in an early newspaper account as having seen three sea serpents swimming off the coast of Newfoundland.

"The largest was estimated to be from fifty to sixty feet in length," the witness informed the colonial newsman. "The smaller serpents were no more than fifteen feet in full length. They moved along with an up-and-down motion, undulating through the ocean waters. The larger serpent, which I judge to have been either a father or mother, had a head about the size of a full-grown horse. The head was held about eight to ten feet above the surface of the water. The two smaller animals were on either side of the great beast, swimming with their heads about three feet above the water. They moved along with the same up-and-down movement, although they were slightly behind the larger one."

Captain Elkanah Finney was retired from the sea and living on Warren's Cove on Cape Cod when he told his friends of another serpent sighting. Captain Finney spent his afternoons watching the ocean for passing ships. "I've got my telescope set up in the front yard," he explained. "I enjoy watching any ship or boat that passes."

With the use of his telescope, Captain Finney provided a remarkable description of an unusual sea animal swimming by one morning. He related:

". . . It came towards me in a southerly direction, very rapidly, until he was in a line with me, when he stopped, and lay entirely still on the surface of the

water. I then had a good view of him through my glass, at the distance of a quarter of a mile. His appearance in this situation was like a string of buoys. I saw perhaps thirty or forty of these protuberances or bunches, which were about the size of a barrel. The head appeared to be about six or eight feet long, and where it was connected with the body was a little larger than the body. His head tapered off to the size of a horse's head. I could not discern any mouth. But what I supposed to be his under jaw had a white stripe extending the whole length of the head, just above the water. While he lay in this situation, he appeared to be about a hundred or a hundred and twenty feet long. The body appeared to be of a uniform size. I saw no part of the animal which I supposed to be a tail. I therefore thought he did not discover to me his whole length. His color was deep brown or black. I could not discover any eyes, mane, gills or breathing holes. I did not see any fins or legs. The animal did not utter any sound, and it did not appear to notice any thing. It remained still and motionless for five minutes or more."

The sea serpent appeared off Warren's Cove around dawn on the day after Captain Finney's first sighting. "He seemed to feel safe there," said the captain. "On the next morning, I watched the animal for a couple of hours through my glass. He spent a lot of time diving under the water. He remained under the surface for ten minutes and, during one dive, remained below for upwards of a quarter of an hour. He was apparently diving for his breakfast. He could not have selected a better area for his feeding. The cove is filled with many types of fish at this time of the year."

The sighting by Captain Finney did not intrigue the scientific establishment. Their interest in sea serpents was triggered by the fantastic "sea serpent" summer of 1817. The first report of a serpent came

from the harbor at Cape Ann, near Gloucester, Massachusetts. Two housewives had decided to walk around the harbor that day when they claimed to have seen a serpent.

"It was swimming along just like the ocean belonged to it," declared Hazel Smallton.

"Huge and black and the longest thing you ever seen," said her companion, Beulah Johnson.

Although both women provided a detailed description of the serpent, their report was ignored. Later that week, however, a group of Gloucester fishermen came sailing into port with a story about a gigantic sea snake moving along near their boat. The following day, on August 10, seaman Amos Story was planning to fish from the shore when he sighted the serpent.

"It was one of the biggest things I've ever seen" Story informed his awed audience at a local tavern. "It was swimming in the direction of Ten Pound Island. I hate to think what might have happened if I'd gone swimming with that thing in the water. It could eat a man alive!"

As these reports spread, the people living near the sea started watching for the monster. On the afternoon of August 14, the serpent came swimming along the shore. An excited crowd, estimated to be from fifteen to forty people and including Justice of the Peace, London Nash, watched as the serpent undulated past them.

"Boys, we ought to catch the thing," Nash told his friends. "Nobody will believe a bunch of stories about a serpent in Gloucester Harbor. What we ought to do is kill it. The carcass can be our proof."

Urged on by Nash and his friends, the fishermen of Gloucester rushed to the harbor and launched five boats. Crowded with experienced fishermen, armed with muskets and harpoons, the boats sailed toward

the monster. Matthew Gaffney had been doing carpenter work on a ship when the sighting occurred. He dropped his tools, grabbed a musket from the ship's cabin, and leaped in one of the boats. The only man on board with a gun, Gaffney was given a prime seat in the bow. While his companions rowed, Gaffney checked over his weapon.

"Just a bit more," shouted the carpenter. "I want a good shot at the head!"

The loud shouts of the pursuing fishermen frightened the serpent. Looking around, the animal sighted the approaching boats and started to swim toward the ocean. The fishermen in Gaffney's boat pulled their oars as hard as possible. Suddenly, the serpent stopped and looked back. The boat shot ahead and Matthew Gaffney found himself a few feet away from the serpent's head.

"Shoot him, Matt!" cried a fisherman.

Gaffney brought up his musket. He sighted down the barrel, taking aim on the serpent's head. There was a loud explosion and the smell of gunpowder.

"I hit it!" yelled Gaffney.

At that moment, the serpent's head moved slightly. The eager fishermen waited expectantly for the beast to drop dead. They watched with fear as the animal turned and began to swim away.

"But I hit it!" Gaffney said, watching the serpent swim out of the harbor.

"It sure didn't hurt it," said a companion.

An older man was rowing near the rear of the boat. "Boys, I think we'd better get back to shore," he said with quiet conviction. "If that thing gets mad and decides to come back, we're all goners."

That night, there was plenty of conversation in the homes and taverns of Gloucester. Everyone had an opinion on the size, origin and reason for the serpent's appearance. Several fanatics claimed the serpent was a

sign that the world was coming to an end. An eccentric woman claimed the serpent was "Satan who has come to tempt us!"

As dawn came up on the following day, a Gloucester merchant walked down to the harbor and saw the serpent undulating through the water. On August 16, several people saw the animal in the harbor. It was also in view of a fishing ship's crew for several minutes. "We were so close to the thing we could have reached out and touched it," one seaman told his friends that evening.

By this time, news of the fantastic sea serpent cavorting in Gloucester Harbor had spread throughout New England. Rumors of the animal reached the prestigious Linnaean Society of New England, a group of men with scientific and professional interests. Within hours after the reports were in Boston, the Linnaean Society had established a Committee of Inquiry to investigate the incident. Dr. Jacob Bigelow was named to head the inquiry. He was assisted by Judge John Davis and a naturalist, Francis C. Gray. The three men left Boston on the next stage to Gloucester, perhaps wondering if they were chasing a phantom.

When they arrived in Gloucester, they discovered that London Nash had used his office as Justice of the Peace to obtain sworn statements on the serpent. Nash went to work interviewing each witness alone, asking his fellow townsmen to remain silent about their sighting until he had obtained statements from everyone. After a witness had made a statement in his own words, without prompting from Nash, he asked a series of questions about the serpent. The list of twenty-five questions was as follows:

1. When did you first see this animal?
2. How often and how long did you see it?
3. At what times of the day?

4. At what approximate distance?
5. How near was the animal to shore?
6. Describe the general appearance of the animal.
7. Was the animal moving or at rest?
8. How fast did the animal move and in what direction?
9. What portion of the animal was above the water and at what height?
10. Did it appear to be jointed or serpentine?
11. If serpentine, were its sinuosities vertical or horizontal.
12. How many portions were out of the water at the same time?
13. What were their color, thickness, and length?
14. Did they appear rough or smooth?
15. What was the size and shape of the head? Were there horns, ears or other appendages on the head?
16. Would you describe the appearance of the eyes and mouth?
17. Did you see any breathing holes or gills? If so, where?
18. Did you see any fins or legs?
19. Did you see a mane or hair on the animal?
20. What was the appearance of the animal's tail?
21. Did you hear it make any sound?
22. Did it seem to pursue, avoid or notice any thing?
23. Did you see more than one animal?
24. How many people saw it?
25. Can you think of any more remarkable facts?

When the Linnaean Society's investigators arrived in Gloucester, they discovered that the Justice of the Peace had obtained statements from eight witnesses. Nash had also gathered an affidavit on the sighting by Rev. Cummings, added his personal views on what he had seen in the harbor, and added a report on Captain Finney's serpent. Typical of the statements was that sworn to by Matthew Gaffney, the carpenter who discharged his musket at the animal. Gaffney stated:

"I, Matthew Gaffney of Gloucester in the County of Essex, Ship Carpenter, do dispose and say: That on the fourteenth day of August, A.D. 1817, between the hours of four and five o'clock in the afternoon I saw a strange marine animal, resembling a serpent in the harbor in said Gloucester. I was in a boat and was within thirty feet of him. His head appeared as large as a barrel, and his length that I saw, I should judge forty feet, at least. The top of his head was of a dark color, and the underpart of his head appeared nearly white, as did several feet of his belly, that I saw. I supposed and do believe that the whole of his belly was nearly white. I fired at him when he was nearest to me. I had a good gun and took good aim. I aimed at his head and think I must have hit him. . . . My gun carries a ball of eighteen to the pound; and I suppose there is no person in town more accustomed to shooting than I am. I have seen the animal at several other times, but never had so good a view of him, as on this day. His motion was vertical like a caterpillar."

When the Linnaean Society started checking on the sea serpent, everyone decided the animal must exist. After all, a group of highly respected scientists were in Gloucester; here were prestigious men out every day talking to witnesses about the sea serpent. Skeptics and critics decided there was something more than hallucinations to the New England reports. Several enterprising promoters offered a reward for the capture of the animal. Fishermen and whaling ship captains set traps for the serpent off the harbor, but by now the animal had vanished.

The *Report of the Committee of the Linnaean Society of New England* was eventually published with excellent drawings of the serpent. However, their conclusions merely added to the confusion. Justice of the Peace London Nash snorted with

indignation when he read the report.

"I expected more out of educated men," Nash snapped. "They've decided the serpent is a cousin to the ordinary black snake. They've decided the animal is a reptile that was attempting to reach land so it could lay its eggs in the sand."

The Society labeled the serpent as *Scoliophis atlanticus,* the Humped Snake of the Atlantic. Their efforts tried to compare the serpent to the ordinary black snake. "On the whole, as these two animals agree in so many conspicuous, important and peculiar characteristics, and as no material differences between them has yet been pointed out, excepting that of size, the Society will probably feel justified in considering them individuals of the same species, and entitled to the same name, until a more close examination of the great Serpent shall have disclosed some difference of structure, important enough to constitute a specific distinction."

The Linnaean Report was greeted with ridicule and laughter in the hallowed halls of academia. Newspapers published editorials condemning the ridiculous comparison between a small land snake and whatever had shown up in Gloucester Harbor.

London Nash summed up public opinion in a letter to a Maine newspaper.

"We don't know what the animal was that showed up in our harbor," the Gloucester Justice of the Peace wrote. "Most of my townsmen, including those who viewed the animal for some time, feel it was definitely not an enlarged or giant version of the common black snake."

Chapter X

NEW ENGLAND'S SEA SERPENTS PART II

Like some prehistoric animal from the dim mists of time, the sea serpents continued to frolic each summer off the eastern United States. The Gloucester serpent triggered an influx of these animals that lasted for a decade. Sea serpents were spotted in scores of areas, ranging from Newfoundland down to the balmy waters off northern Florida. Hundreds of reputable people witnessed the strange creatures, often sending their reports to the Linnaean Committee in Boston.

During the winter of 1817-18, the world waited eagerly for the Society's report on the Gloucester sightings. The scientific community in both the United States and Europe were open-minded and willing to accept the existence of some unusual marine creature. When the society compared the serpent to an overgrown black snake, their conclusion was like an exploding bomb. Recognizing the stupidity of the summary, scientists rushed for cover. "Someone will claim the damned thing is a large garden worm," snapped one exasperated professor of zoology.

Several other factors contributed to the scientific moratorium on sea serpents. By the spring of 1818,

a mania for sea serpents had seized the country imagination. With a sharp eye cast for a quick dolla the hustlers and promoters moved into the field. canny showman with a gift for exaggeration exhibite a large black snake in several New England cities declaring the poor creature to be a "baby sea serpent.

"Yes sir, folks!" the promoter told his audiences "This is an original sea serpent taken from th beaches near Gloucester. The parent came up o land and laid an egg just like a turtle. What you se here is an infant sea serpent!"

When the quick dollars ended in the large cities the canny promoter headed for the boondocks. H was surprised to arrive in western Pennsylvania an run into another promoter exhibiting a black snake Viewers had their choice of seeing two original se serpents during the next few weeks.

While the promoters were fooling the public, th hoaxters were driving the Linnaean Society into a state of chaos. The first blizzard of reports came from misguided believers. Someone had seen a log floating in a river and rushed to the nearest newspaper to report a sea serpent. The next stack of reports came from the circuit riders like Rev. Cummings. They came in from the boondocks with some of the tallest tales in Christendom. Innocent and naive, the ministers believed every word spun by the storytellers.

Rev. William Hanks arrived at the Linnaean Society's headquarters one day with a story told to him by a parishioner. "He was on a ship several years ago and saw a sea serpent rise up out of the water," said Rev. Hanks. "The entire crew witnessed the monster's approach to the ship. They were almost frightened to death when the creature decided to leap over their ship. The creature's tail struck the deck as it was going over and almost sank the vessel."

Officials of the Linnaean Society groaned silently when a new clergyman came knocking on their door. While sea serpents and lake monsters are not known to attack without being provoked, many stories concerned the loss of a wife, a child or a treasured pet dog to the animal. While the storyteller looked on with disbelief, the sea serpent went out to sea with Maude, little Fred, or good old Hector, the World's Greatest Pup.

The wild tales were at least more entertaining than the fanatical tirades of people with eccentric views on religion. Several doomsday prophets showed up at the society, their worn and well-read Bibles open to underlined passages about serpents. "The deadly snake tempted Eve in the garden," a visitor informed the group. "Now, Satan has sent the same deadly snake to tempt the sinful people of this new nation."

While the Linnaean Society collected this data, another hoax was headlined on the front pages of several newspapers. The *Quarterly Journal of Science, Literature and the Arts of the Royal Institute of London* also printed the report, since considered to be representative of a series of imagined sightings. The report said:

"I, the undersigned, Joseph Woodward, captain of the *Adamant* schooner of Hingham, being on my route from Penobscot to Hingham, steering W.N.W. and being about ten leagues from the coast, perceived last Sunday at two p.m. something on the surface of the water, which seemed to be of the size of a large boat. Supposing that it might be part of the wreck from a ship, I approached it and, when within a few fathoms of it, discovered to my great surprise and that of my crew that it was a monstrous serpent. When I approached nearer, it coiled itself up, instantly uncoiling itself again, and withdrew with extreme rapidity. On my approaching again, it coiled itself a

second time and placed itself at a distance of 60 feet, at most, from the bow of the ship.

"I had one of my guns loaded with cannon ball and musket bullets. I fired it at the head of the monster; my crew and myself distinctly heard the ball and bullets strike against his body, from which they rebounded as if they had struck against a rock. The serpent shook his head and tail in an extraordinary manner, and advanced towards the ship with open jaws. I had caused the cannon to be reloaded and pointed it at his throat; but he had come so near that all the crew was seized with terror, and we thought only of getting out of his way. He almost touched the vessel. Had I not tacked as I did, he would almost certainly have come aboard. He dived; but in a moment we saw him again, with his head on one side of the vessel, and his tail on the other, as if he was going to lift us up and upset us. However, we did not feel any shock. He remained five hours near us, only going backward and forward.

"The fears with which he at first inspired us having subsided, we were able to examine him intently. I estimate his length is at least twice that of my schooner, that is to say, 130 feet; his head is full 12 or 15; the diameter of the body below the neck is not less than six feet; the size of the head is in porportion to that of his body. He is of a blackish color, his ear-holes are about 12 feet from the extremity of his head. In short, the whole has a terrible look.

"When he coils himself up, he places his tail in such a manner that it aids him in darting forward with great force: he moves in all directions with the greatest facility and astonishing rapidity. Joseph Woodward (His signature). . . Hingham, May 12, 1818.

"This declaration is attested by Peter Holmes and John Mayo, who made affidavits of the truth of it before a justice of the peace."

Investigators since that time have pointed out that a seal from a Justice of the Peace should have been affixed on the bottom of Captain Woodward's statement. Careful reading of the report indicates at no point that Captain Woodward was appearing before a notary or J.P.

The report was published thirty years later in England's *Zoologist* magazine in 1848. One reader wrote in to dispute the sighting. He stated:

". . . Captain Woodward says, the beast moved with extreme, or, as he afterwards expressed himself, astonishing rapidity; that when he fired at the monster it was sixty feet at the most from the bow of the vessel, which appears to have been the nearest part of the ship to the animal; but after he fired the beast advanced toward his ship; that he had caused his cannon to be reloaded and pointed at its throat – of course while it was advancing towards his vessel – but before he could fire his crew was seized with terror, that he tacked and got out of its way.

"So here we have an animal sixty feet from the ship, moving with astonishing rapidity towards the ship, which it appears was also moving toward the animal, and yet allowing time to load a cannon, point it at its throat, and afterwards tack to get out of its way. Truly a most accomodating serpent! But again, the animal remained five hours near the ship, allowing itself to be minutely examined, but yet no further attempts to kill the beast! And what is almost equally strange, though even the position of the ear-holes are mentioned – such minute observation does Captain Woodward seem to have made – yet no description is given of any scales, or anything else, to account for what is before stated, that Captain Woodward and his crew 'distinctly heard the ball and bullets strike against his body, from which they

rebounded as though they had struck against a rock' "

(Signed) *W.W. Cooper*

In defense of Captain Woodward's tarnished reputation, we might consider that Cooper was developing his theories some three decades after the alleged sighting. During my personal investigations of UFOs and other phenomena, I have discovered that paranormal occurences do not always fit into a precise rational pattern. The sight of a long sea serpent coiling and uncoiling near a schooner would undoubtedly frighten any seaman. Captain Woodward gave no description of the monster's scales "from which they (bullets and ball) rebounded as if they had struck a rock." These details may be missing because the serpent did not have scales. The barrage may have had an effect because, as Captain Woodward pointed out, the serpent went under his ship, then remained nearby for five hours. This indicates the animal may have been injured, or stunned, by the cannon ball and bullets.

With the animal near the vessel, but subdued, there would be no need of further attack. As Captain Woodward stated, "The fears with which he first inspired us having subsided," the seamen examined the creature. A stunned sea serpent would represent very little threat to the ship and crew. I prefer to place the Woodward sighting in the category of "incomplete." Neither I nor my researchers have found any trace of the statements by Peter Holmes or John Mayo; this may be because the Woodward sighting was a hoax, or that the affidavits were simply not made public.

Whatever we think of the Woodward report, it was the first of many during the long sea serpent summer of 1818. *The Boston Commercial Advertiser* edition of June 9 carried a story of a gigantic, 190-foot serpent resting in the ocean off Cape Henry, Virginia.

The captain of the ship, the *Wilson*, at first took the monstrous carcass for floating wreckage. After the ship drew closer to the animal, a large boat was lowered. Several seamen examined the beast from the boat. They related that the serpent did not attack them nor make any effort to swim away.

Another report came from the captain of the *Delia*. He reported seeing a serpent engaged in a life-or-death struggle with a large whale near Cape Ann. Like Captain Woodward's disputed statement, the captain stated the serpent coiled its body high out of the water in order to fight off the whale. Shortly after that, reports came in from several different locations along the eastern seaboard, including a return visit to Gloucester Harbor.

And so it went.

Hardly a day passed in 1818 that didn't include another sighting of a sea serpent. The statements made by eyewitnesses were similar in details. One good sighting took place in Gloucester when the serpent popped up offshore from Squam lighthouse. The appearance of the sea monster triggered a massive search by Massachusetts whalers intent on collecting a reward for the beast's capture. One boat was manned by Captain Richard Rich. His crew located and followed a serpent for several hours. Rich allegedly harpooned the animal, but the weapon dislodged from the serpent's body and it vanished. The *Boston Weekly Messenger* published a story on the Rich episode in their edition of September 17 of that year. After a number of other sightings, the sea serpent vanished as autumn temperatures chilled the ocean waters.

The next sea serpent came gliding along the surface off the Massachusetts coast in June, 1819. Besides giving their statement to the Linnaean Society, Captain Hawkins Wheeler and first mate Gresham

Bennett wrote a report for the *American Journal of Science* (Boston; 1820). "He was about sixty feet long," said Gresham. "He was no more than 100 yards from our vessel. His head was as long as a horse's and was a proper snake's head. There was a degree of flatness and a slight hollow on the top of his head. His eyes were prominent and they stood out from the surface by a considerable degree, resembling in that respect the eyes of a toad, and were nearer to the mouth of the animal than to the back of the head."

The Wheeler-Bennett sighting started sea serpent mania in the summer of 1819. Several interesting reports can be found for that year. Among them is a serpent appearing off a crowded beach near Lynn, Massachusetts. The animal was viewed by several prominent New Englanders, including one James Prince. He forwarded a description of the beast to the Linnaean Society and several New England newspapers. He wrote:

"His head appeared about three feet out of the water; I counted thirteen bunches (*i.e., humps*) on his back. My family thought there were fifteen of these bunches and we judged that his length was around fifty feet, and at the extent, not more than sixty feet long. However, we were unable to judge if the animal's wake might not have added to his appearance of length, or whether the undulation of the water, or his peculiar manner of propelling himself, might not cause the appearance of protuberances, I leave for your better judgment."

It was estimated that two hundred people were on the Massachusetts beach when the animal came into view. There were several excellent reports that summer from reputable people who made sworn statements about their sightings. One of the best reports came from Rev. Cheever Felch, a naval

chaplain. He was in Gloucester Harbor on August 26, 1819 riding in a small boat from the schooner *Science*. His letter about the episode was published shortly afterward in the *Boston Weekly Sentinel*. Rev. Felch's statement read:

". . . When we were abreast of Dallivan's Neck, William T. Malbone, Esq., the commander of the schooner, seeing some appearance on the water, said – 'There is your sea serpent,' meaning it to be a laugh on me, for believing in its existence; but it proved to be no joke.

"The animal was then between thirty and forty yards distance from us. Mr. Malbone, Midshipman Blake, myself and our four boatsmen, had a distinct view of him. He soon sunk; but not so deep that we could trace his course. He rose again within twenty yards distance of us, and lay some time on the water. He then turned and steered for Ten Pound Island and Stage Point.

"As he often came near the Point, we thought we could get a better view of him there, than from the boat, of which he seemed suspicious. Mr. Malbone and myself landed; and the boat was sent to order the schooner down, for the purpose of trying what effect a twelve pound cannonade would have upon him.

"He did not remain long after we landed, so that I was unable to effect my intention of ascertaining, accurately, his length, with my instruments. From my knowledge of aquatic animals, and habits of intimacy with marine appearances, I could not be deceived. We had a good view of him, except the very short period he was under water for about a half hour.

"His color is dark brown with white under the throat. His size, we could not accurately ascertain, but his head is about three feet in circumference, flat and much smaller than his body. We did not see his tail; but from the end of the head to the fartherest

protuberance, was not far from one hundred feet. I speak with a degree of certainty, from being much accustomed to measure and estimate distances and length. I counted fourteen bunches on his back, the first one, say, ten or twelve feet from his head, and the others about seven feet apart. They decreased in size toward the tail. These bunches were sometimes counted with, and sometimes without, a glass. Mr. Malbone counted thirteen. Mr. Blake thirteen and fourteen, and the boatman about the same number.

"His motion was sometimes very rapid, and at other times he lay nearly still. He turned slowly, and took up considerable room in doing so. He sometimes darted under water, with the greatest velocity, as if seizing prey. The protuberances were not from his motion, as they were the same whether in slow or rapid movement. His motion was partly vertical and partly horizontal, like that of fresh water snakes. I have been much acquainted with the snakes in our interior waters. His motion was the same.

"I have given you in round numbers, one hundred feet, for his length, that is what we saw; but I should say that he must be one hundred and thirty feet in length, allowing for his tail. There was a considerable number of birds about the Sea Serpent as I have seen them about a snake on shore. That there is an aquatic animal in the form of a Snake is not to be doubted. Mr. Malbone, till this day, was incredulous. No man would now convince him that there was not such a being."

Sightings of these unusual marine creatures continued to pour in during the next few years. Cape Cod, Gloucester, and the Maine coastline were favorite spots for the serpents. Invariably, these old reports are monotonous reading because the witnesses were apparently describing the same animal in a fairly graphic manner. Researchers are often amazed at the

similarity in these early New England reports — a similarity that exists despite the span of several years and a wide geographical area. Despite the growing pattern from a diverse group of witnesses, many people grew tired of hearing or reading about sea serpents.

There is a considerable parallel between these early sea serpent reports and current sightings of Unidentified Flying Objects. Reputable scientists then and now were wary of the strange reports, refusing to risk their academic reputations on something supposedly out of the realm of the known. The people who reported a serpent, or a UFO today, were sometimes ridiculed. The population was fairly evenly divided, then as now, between the believers and skeptics.

Professor Samuel Latham Mitchell originated the "swamp gas" theory of sea serpent sightings, a la the infamous Air Force explanation for a Michigan UFO flap a few years ago. "If there isn't fraud involved, why hasn't someone caught one of these creatures?" asked Professor Mitchell in a lecture in New York City. "There have been dozens of hoaxes. Now, after all of these mistakes, deceptions and willful perversions on the subject, every person of consideration must admit the gambols of porpoises, the slow motions of basking sharks, and the yet different appearances of balaenopterous whales, all of which have fins on their backs, may have given rise to these parts of the narrations, not already herein commented on."

Like a vacationing Bostonian family, the sea serpent continued to return to the New England sea shore each summer. After a while, seeing a serpent became an exciting but routine incident. Fortunately, time passed and the reward for the serpent's body was forgotten. The report by the Linnaean Society

was forgotten except by scientists, who dared not risk academic ire by suggesting the creatures actually existed.

Poring through files that are one hundred and fifty years old, I was struck by the remarkable likeness between the New England serpents and those reported from Scandinavian waters. It was also customary for the serpent to pop up in the icy fjords during the summer months.

The descriptions matched that of the New England serpents except for color. While the American animal was largely black, the Scandinavian beasts were usually described as "brown" or "blackish brown." A half dozen reports were collected by Professor Heinrich Rathke during a visit to Norway; they were subsequently published as *Uber die Seeschlange der Norweger* in *Arch. Naturgesch* in Berlin in 1841. One of Professor Rathke's statements came from a fisherman, Lars Johnoen, who said:

"I have seen sea serpents on several different times, but for the longest sighting and the closest to me, I must go back twelve years ago during the summer dog days in Christiansun Fjord near here. I was alone about noon one day and fishing from a boat. That is when I saw it for three times during a two hour period. It was quite close to me. It came near my boat and, at one time, was only six feet distance from me. I became quite frightened, prayed that God would take my soul, and laid down in the boat. I did hold my head slightly above the edge of the boat to observe the serpent.

"It moved past my boat with a gentle swimming motion. The boat was bobbing up and down from the waves caused by the serpent's passage. Afterwards, the waters returned to their smooth, mirrorlike calmness. After the serpent had moved a good distance away from me, I took out my fishing gear and started

to fish again.

"Not long after I had thrown my line in, the serpent came back again and came very near my boat. My boat was moving up and down again due to the wave action and I laid back down in the bottom. I still kept a wary eye on the animal's movements. After it passed me, it moved off into the distance and then returned again but not nearly so close this third time. A slight wind came up about that time and the animal moved away down the fjord and disappeared.

"Naturally, I was very frightened but I was able to observe the animal with some degree of accuracy. In length, it measured five to six fathoms. The body was shaped like a snake and was about two to three feet in diameter. The tail of the animal also appeared to be round. The head was about as long and as large as a ten-gallon barrel. It was not pointed, but was rounded. The eyes of the serpent were quite large, slightly protruding, and they glistened. They were about four or six inches in diameter. The color of the eyes was a bright red. The animal at no time opened its mouth. Therefore, I cannot give an accurate description of the size of the mouth. It did hold the head above the surface of the water about a yard in the air. A mane, like that you see on horses, started behind the head and extended quite a ways down the neck. This mane spread out on both sides and floated on the surface of the water as it moved. The mane, head and remainder of the animal's body was dark brown in appearance. The body seemed to be quite smooth. I did not see any stripes or other colors. I did not observe any scales or gills on the beast.

"The motions of the serpent were both fast and slow at times. They were very slow and gentle when the creature approached my boat. When I was observing it the best, the animal's movements were like

those of a serpent. It moved in an up-and-down motion – a serpentine movement."

Professor Rathke's research indicates that a serpent, similar and yet different due to the eyes and mane, was observed by numerous people off the coast of Norway. Perhaps the Norwegian animal was a cousin to the North American serpent. The description of the beast is reminiscent of the strange horse-headed serpents that were carved on the bows of Viking ships many centuries ago.

Back in the United States, a new form of monster made the headlines in several newspapers in South Carolina. The schooner *Eagle* was sailing into the waters near Simon's Bay when Captain James DeLand noticed a large animal swimming about 200 yards from the vessel. He told Charleston, South Carolina newsmen that the marine creature resembled an alligator.

"The beast remained quite motionless in the water," Captain DeLand informed the group of excited reporters. "I sailed the *Eagle* to within about twenty yards of the monster, took careful aim with my musket and fired."

"Did you hit it?" asked a reporter.

The captain nodded. "Square onto the back of its head. I know the ball hit home because the animal rose up in the water with a loud, thrashing noise. Then it immediately dived under my ship. My crew and passengers were terrorized because the animal hit our bottom three very hard blows with its tail as it passed beneath us. One blow from the tail hit our stem. Every man on board felt the force of the blow shudder through the ship."

Another newsman asked, "How big was the creature?"

"Every man on board had the time to see the monster," answered Captain DeLand. "We discussed

it later and agreed it was at least seventy feet long."

"What about the thickness of the body?" asked a newsman.

"Boys, that was as round as a sixty gallon keg of molasses." Captain DeLand pointed to a stack of molasses kegs on the pier. "The thing was shaped like an eel. It didn't seem to have any fins. At least we didn't see any. But the body was covered with scales. The creature's back was filled with joints or bunches."

"What about the head?" another newsman inquired.

"The head and beak looked something like an alligator. The head was about ten feet long and as big as a hogshead barrel," said the captain. "We did sight a much smaller monster that was quite a distance from the ship. But one of my men used the telescope to judge it was of the same species. We moved a bit closer to the smallest one. But it moved quickly away from us when we shot and missed it with the musket. Later on, we were pulling away from that area when we saw the two creatures swimming close together."

A reporter looked up from his notebook. "Are you going back after it?"

Captain DeLand shook his head. "That thing could have done some real damage to our ship. If it had continued to strike the bottom of the *Eagle* with its tail, the monster might have sunk our ship. You can imagine what it would be like to have to abandon ship with a thing like that in the water. A man wouldn't have a chance to save his life. No sir, boys! I'm glad the thing went the other way. If we see another one, we'll turn and go as fast as possible in another direction. We're lucky to come out of this with as little damage as we've got."

Some researchers have claimed that Captain DeLand struck a floating piece of wreckage, perhaps a log. He covered up his mistake by claiming he encountered a vicious sea serpent. Yet, his story did

have a natural thread in it. Dr. Ludwig Freidrich von Froriep, a German naturalist and sea serpent enthusiast, printed the *Eagle* incident in his highly respected *Notizen aus dem Gebiete der Naturund Heilkunde*. This was a highly responsible publication for German scientists. During the era of the mass sightings in the United States, Dr. von Froriep and his colleagues in Germany printed every scrap of data available on the serpents. They accepted the animal as being worthy of study. Their counterparts in England dismissed most authentic sightings as "hallucinations by those crazy Rebels in the states."

In *The Great Sea Serpent* (Linden & Linden; London, 1892), Dr. Antoon C. Oudemans dismissed the *Eagle* incident. "I consider the whole account as a story," he informed his readers. "It is not the habit of a sea serpent to attack a ship after having been struck by a ball, but to plunge down and disappear."

Once again, many years after the incident, a skeptic applied his version of reality to an unknown animal. Frankly, we don't know what a sea serpent will do when wounded. And, assuming the monster did exist, attack might be a normal reaction to being struck by a bullet.

Another unusual description of a strange sea creature came from John Lloyd Stephens, the man who first triggered world interest in the Mayan ruins in Central America. A New York attorney, Stephens had traveled to the Holy Land and written a best-selling book on his experiences there. Hearing of ancient stone cities in the jungle wilderness of Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico, Stephens unearthed a large number of cities, monuments and artifacts during his archeological expeditions. In his book, *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan* (New York; Harper & Row, 1841) Stephens told of his expedition's encounter with a sea monster.

"Towards evening, we saw an enormous monster with a straight black head, ten feet out of the water, moving directly towards our ship," Stephens related. "The captain said it was not a whale. Another of the same kind appeared at the stern. We were really nervous; but were relieved by hearing them spout and seeing a column of water thrown into the air – at dark they were lying huge and motionless on the surface of the water."

More interested in archeology than marine monsters, Stephens provided only a brief description of the animals. We have no way of knowing what beasts might have been seen in those tropical waters; however, they do not appear to be aquatic cousins to the New England or Scandinavian sea serpents.

Chapter XI

RECENT SEA SERPENT SIGHTINGS

March 24, 1962, dawned bright and clear over Florida. Grateful for a pleasant weekend, families flocked to shopping centers. Children cried and ran along the streets, happy to be out of school on a warm Saturday. It was just the sort of day that Edward Brian McCleary and his four friends had been waiting for. The young men were skindivers and they had talked of exploring the half-sunk wreckage of the *Massachusetts* in Pensacola Bay, Florida. The rusting old hulk was like a magnet for skindivers. Half submerged in water, the wreck was a perfect place to test a diver's skill.

Taking their skindiving equipment, the five young men drove to the bay. Talking excitedly, they parked their car and inflated a rubber raft for their trip over to the wreck. The raft rode low in the water after the boys and their equipment were aboard. Someone mentioned something about being swamped. "Don't worry," another replied. "The weather's fine."

The boys were paddling toward the *Massachusetts* when nature interrupted their journey. Without warning, a sudden storm came moving in. The sky

darkened, the surface of the sea churned as heavy waves flooded over the raft.

"We're going to sink!" a boy yelled.

"We'd better do something!" There was a panicked quiver in the boy's voice.

Fearful that the raft would be swamped, the five young men discussed their dilemma briefly. They decided to put on their diving equipment and drop into the water. Although the raft was bobbing wildly, they planned to hang onto the sides. As quickly as they dropped over the side, the raft rose higher in the water. The boys rode out the storm in that manner, praying that the squall would lift before they were swept out to sea.

After a long interval, the storm ended. The boys pulled themselves back into the raft and headed toward their destination, the *Massachusetts*. As they moved across the water, they noticed a thick, heavy fog rolling in toward them. They continued on their trip because several of the boys were familiar with the waters. Suddenly, the fog became permeated with an oppressive odor.

"The misty air was filled with the odor of dead fish," wrote McCleary in the May, 1965, issue of *Fate* Magazine. "Just then, about forty feet away, we heard a tremendous splash. Large waves reached the raft and broke over the sides."

The boys discussed the splash. They decided that a boat had not created the sound. There was no danger of being run down in the fog. They peered through the thick mist for some sign of the intruder.

One boy gasped for breath.

"I can't breathe," he complained. "The smell. . ."

His words were drowned out by another heavy splash.

"What is it?" a boy yelled.

Suddenly, a terrifying sight loomed out of the fog.

A thick, pole-like thing came bearing down on the raft, a frightening, bulbous head attached to the top of the pole. The sickening fumes became stronger as the deadly monster came closer.

"What is it?" screamed one of the group.

The head remained erect until it neared the raft. Then, the pole-like neck dipped easily and the creature vanished beneath the surface.

As the creature vanished, a heavy silence enveloped the five boys on the raft.

"What is it?" asked the boy again.

"Look," a companion said quietly. "I don't know what that thing was. But we'd better get out of here."

A boy in the end of the raft agreed. "Let's head for the ship. We can crawl up on the part that's out of water."

A large wave came flooding over the raft.

"We'll never get there like this," a boy said nervously.

Another splash sounded off in the fog.

"Let's swim for it, someone yelled.

Panicked by the appearance of the sea creature, the five young men slipped their skindiver's fins back on. They dove over the side of the raft into the fog-shrouded water. They were determined to keep together and find safety on the wrecked hull of the *Massachusetts* projecting up out of the water.

Suddenly, behind them, came a strange hissing noise. There was a sound of fierce, heavy splashing.

A terrible scream whipped through the fog.

"It lasted for maybe a half minute," McCleary recalled. "Then I heard Warren yell."

"Help me! Hey! Help!" called Warren. "The thing has grabbed Brad!"

The yell for help was ended abruptly with a short, tight scream.

The three remaining swimmers remained close

together. They headed for the *Massachusetts,* not knowing if they might not be attacked at any instant.

"Eric!" gasped McCleary. "You there?"

"I'm here," Eric responded.

"Where's Larry?"

"We'd better look for him."

The two boys swam around, then dove, searching for their friend. The search ended when Eric got a cramp in his leg. McCleary wrapped his arm around his friend's neck and continued toward the wrecked vessel. A high wave slammed against the two divers. Knocked about by the water, McCleary's grip relaxed and the two boys were separated. McCleary was pushed down into the ocean and, when he surfaced, he saw Eric swimming a few feet ahead of him. McCleary froze when he saw a large, serpentine neck rise up out of the water next to Eric.

"I could see the long neck and two small eyes," he recalled. "The mouth opened and it bent over. It dove on top of Eric, dragging him under. I screamed and began to swim past the ship. My insides were shaking uncontrollably."

McCleary has no memory of the next few hours. Somehow he managed to swim the two miles to shore. He does recall a jumbled montage of crawling onto the beach, sprawling out in the sand, crawling into a tower of some sort, and spending the night in a nightmarish sleep. Later, he remembers falling on his face in front of a group of youngsters. His next memory is awakening in the hospital at Pensacola Naval Base.

McCleary reported that none of the newspapers told all of the truth about the death of his four friends. The newspapers failed to report on his own escape from the terrible sea beast. The newspapers carried a story of the tragedy, reporting the deaths of the young men as accidental drownings. Reporters who

interviewed McCleary informed the young man that the sea serpent would not be mentioned in their articles. Perhaps they felt the young diver was suffering from hallucinations or shock brought on by the death of his friends.

In his article, McCleary stated that he asked the director of the rescue search unit, E.E. McGovern, if the story about the monster was believed.

According to McCleary, McGovern answered: "The sea has a lot of secrets. There are a lot of things that we don't know about. People don't believe these things because they're afraid to. Yes, I believe you, but there's not much else I can do."

If Edward Brian McCleary is not a victim of shock, the Pensacola tragedy is one of the few cases of hostility from a sea serpent. While the creatures often appear benign and gentle, we must remember that any creature is wild. A storm, unfamiliar waters, or other factors affecting behavior could trigger a vicious attack by these beasts.

Another unusual incident in the field occurred on Monday, August 7, 1967 when the Gagne brothers of Biddleford, Maine, sailed out to haul up their lobster nets. The Gagne brothers are lobstermen and accustomed to the many variables of the sea. But even they were surprised when their nets came up with an incomplete skeleton of a weird sea animal. Richard Gagne was searching for one of his lobster traps in an outboard motorboat. The location was off the southern coast of Maine. When he finally located the trap, he pulled up the net with the bony skeleton of something with a snake-like head and a neck. The neck was said to be over eight feet in length.

His brother, Peter Gagne, was also puzzled by the skeleton.

"The eye sockets were what got to me," said Peter. "I could put my fist in either one of them. They were

that big."

The eye sockets were located on each side of the head like those of a snake. Chunks of flesh could be seen clinging to the bony vertebrae. The story of the Gagne brother's unusual find was covered by news reporters and distributed nationally by United Press International. People flocked to see the skeleton. Many remarked that "the skeleton looks just like what a sea serpent ought to look like."

The Gagne skeletonal remains reminded many monster hunters of the huge, unidentified creature that landed on an isolated beach in Tasmania in August, 1960. The carcass lay on the beach for two years after three cattlemen found the remains on the rugged island's northwestern coast. It took two years of writing letters and sending out sketches before a trained scientist from the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Organization took interest. Bruce Mollison, curator of vertebrate mammals, decided to make a journey into the wilderness and take a look at the strange carcass.

The first surprise for Mollison was that the carcass had not deteriorated in the two years. Although it had lain for that time on the beach, exposed to all types of weather, the carcass had not totally rotted. Some parts of the humped animal had been torn away by wild animals, but enough remained for Mollison to decide he was faced with an unknown specie of fish or mammal. Mollison quickly became convinced that the 28-foot long, 18-foot wide monster was not catalogued in the annals of science. It was not a known example of whale, ray, shark or similar specie.

The strange skin of the animal was carefully inspected by Mollison. It was a hard, rubbery surface covered with a straggly hair. Surprisingly, the hair was slick and greasy. There were several rows of spines

skirting to the rear of the carcass, each mounted on flanges. Bruce Mollison sent samples of the monster's flesh to the Royal Prince Albert Hospital for analysis. Experts there were not able to link the flesh to any known specie. Perhaps dubious of Mollison's report, the CSIRO sent a field expedition back into the wilderness to inspect the monster. They hacked, chopped and dug into the creature and ended up with an enigma. "We're unable to identify the beast," said a spokesman for the field expedition.

Then, a certain bureaucrat issued a proclamation from his desk. The flesh of the animal closely resembled that of a whale. As sc often occurs, especially in incidents connected with strange and unusual phenomena, the official took the easy way out. The creature must be a whale, he decided. Case closed. Perhaps we should not be too angry at these poor, desk-bound bureaucrats. They live out their lives in quiet desperation, waiting for their pension and retirement. Don't make waves. Don't get ensnarled in a controversy. Those are the two important rules of officialdom. And, naturally, all hell is going to break loose if you have an unknown monster in your backyard.

Bruce Mollison expressed his surprise and shock at the official CSIRO report. The ranchers who discovered the carcass were fuming with anger. "We know what a bloody whale looks like," said one of the ranchers. "We don't need a bunch of petty officials coming out here to tell us what a whale looks like. This bloody thing was not a whale. Anyone who says it is is lying or trying to save their own skin."

When you mention sea serpents or lake monsters to scientists, they have a standard reaction. "Bring us a specimen to examine," is the condescending reply.

When they are given a strange beast, officials

appear to make snap judgments and quickly categorize a carcass into a known species.

The Tasmanian carcass was a whale.

With a hump!

With shaggy hair covering the body!

Just a plain, ordinary whale!

Another unidentified creature popped up off the New Jersey coast on August 19, 1963, before a highly interested audience. The *New York Times* reported the sighting was made by Dr. Lionel A. Walford, director of the Fish and Wildlife Research Center of the United States Department of the Interior. Dr. Walford's offices are located at Sandy Hook, New Jersey.

Making his report on the sighting, Dr. Walford cautioned reporters that they should not use the term "sea serpent" in their article. But the cautious scientist provided newsmen with an excellent report on what he had observed.

"It was at least forty feet in length," said Dr. Walford. "It was about five inches thick and perhaps seven to eight inches deep. It looked something like an enormously long, flattened eel. . . I finally made a tentative identification of it as something that is known as a Venus Girdle, a jelly-like creature. . . However, upon examining my references, I soon and surprisingly determined that the Venus Girdle does not grow longer than a few feet. And no amount – of research I could do provided me with a proper identification of this very strange creature."

Whatever it was, it wasn't in the known categories of creatures.

About a year later, on May 12, 1964, three men aboard a Norwegian fishing boat claimed they had spotted a sixty-foot sea monster swimming off Nantucket Island, Massachusetts. Alf Wilhelmsen was strolling on deck of the *Blue Sea* when he spotted the

strange creature. He yelled to his brother, Jens Wilhelmsen, and also alerted their partner, Bjarne Houghan. The three men got a clear, distinct look at the creature that was swimming only a few hundred feet away from their eighty-foot boat.

The Norwegian fishermen said the creature had an alligator-like head. The tail was lobster-like in appearance. The body was covered with black and white dots and a series of humps were the only protrusions on an otherwise smooth back.

The Norwegian fishermen sailed into the harbor at New Bedford and made a report on their fascinating creature. This was in the area where the sea serpents had once frolicked throughout the summer during the past century. When their story was heard along the waterfront, a virtual armada of boats took off in pursuit of the beast. The U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, and dozens of privately owned firms sent boats after the creature.

Three days after the initial sighting, another ship saw the huge serpent. The dragger *Friendship* was about ten miles from where the Norwegians had spotted the creature. When the *Friendship* encountered the serpent, Captain Albert Pike decided his crew should get a once-in-a-lifetime look at a real sea monster. Accordingly, Captain Pike ordered that the *Friendship* circle the serpent twice so that everyone would obtain a good view. Captain Pike and his crewmen also described an alligator-headed creature that matched the Norwegian's description.

They reported that the serpent was moving along through the water at a speed of five knots. The creature did not submerge even once during the *Friendship's* twenty minutes of observation. The *Friendship's* master and crew made no attempt to bring the monster back alive. And, unfortunately, there were no cameras aboard and pictures were

not taken. But the *Friendship's* sighting did add another well-documented sighting to the annals of sea serpent lore.

What are sea serpents?

Some scientists have speculated that, assuming the reports are true, the sea serpent may be some surviving member of the gigantic sea reptiles that lived during the Mesozoic age. No one has brought forth a totally convincing explanation as to why these giant reptiles vanished so quickly. The rapid extinction of dinosaurs on land, pterosaurs in the air, and the deadly ichthyosaurs and plesiosaurs in the sea is unexplained. One day they were merrily ruling all they surveyed. The next moment, they seemed to have vanished.

Among the people leaning toward the plesiosaur explanation for sea serpents was Philip Gosse, a nineteenth century naturalist. Gosse reasoned that the Mesozoic Age ended some tens of millions of years ago. Yet, there was no reason why descendants of these gigantic sea reptiles might not have survived through the centuries. Other scientists have reasoned that in order to survive, the sea reptiles might have evolved into creatures that live in the depths of the oceans.

Some marine biologists feel that reports of lake monsters and sea serpents may indicate the existence of an unknown aquatic mammal. This as yet undiscovered specie would be related to the whale. They report that eyewitness accounts of a hairy mane and flippers – appendages often reported on lake and sea monsters – make it most unlikely that these creatures are reptiles. They report that only a warm-blooded mammal can survive in the icy waters of the North Atlantic ocean, an area where many classic sightings have occurred.

Other zoologists have elaborated on the theory of

an unidentified sea mammal. They have theorized that this gigantic sea creature may be the survivor of a past epoch. A prehistoric species of whale, the aeuglodom or basilosaurus, whose fossilized remains are well known, would be well equipped to be a sea monster.

Basilosaurus was a gigantic beast with a slim, elongated body. It measured approximately seventy feet in length. The skull was long and low. The creature propelled its enormous body with a single pair of flippers located at the frontal part of its body. Basilosaurus survived into the Miocene Epoch, around thirty million years ago. Like other "lost" fish and animals, this creature may have somehow survived the end of the dinosaur and became our modern sea serpent.

Whatever they may be, a world-wide pattern of reports indicates there are massive, yet known, creatures existing in our lakes and oceans.

Chapter XII

ANTEDELUVIAN MONSTERS OF SOUTH AMERICA

South America is a land of many secrets. The myriad mysteries of that enigmatic continent go back to the dawning of history. During my investigation of unusual phenomena and unexplained mysteries, I became intrigued by the neglect of South America by contemporary authors. The result of this curiosity was *Lost Cities of the Ancients* (Zebra Books; New York, 1976). In addition to exploring the mysterious ruins of South America, I gathered data on strange creatures reported in the lakes and rivers of that ancient continent. Since the early Spanish conquest, many explorers have heard about, or seen, these unusual monsters.

"There are tracks of strange beasts, huge and unrecognized, in the mud of the beaches of the lakes behind the unknown forests of the Bolivian Caupolican," declared Col. H.P. Fawcett, D.S.O., a distinguished South American explorer who vanished during his search for a lost city in the Amazonian wilderness. Fawcett made his remarks during a speech before the Royal Geographic Society in London in

1931. He had returned to England after a trek in the jungles. Among the members of the audience was Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the remarkable English novelist, who subsequently wrote about dinosaurs and other creatures in his novel, *The Lost World.*

Doyle's fictional explorers venture into the jungles and discover the existence of prehistoric beasts. Col. Fawcett had mentioned that the lakes in certain South American regions might contain a family of plesiosaurs. Doyle's character, Summerlee, exclaims in the novel: "The plesiosaurus! A fresh water plesiosaurus! That I should have lived to see such a sight! We were blessed, my dear Challenger, above all zoologists since the world began."

In 1922, many of the world's newspapers carried stories of the Pantegonian Plesiosaur. Many zoologists wondered if Fawcett's dream and Doyle's fictionalization would become reality. But scientific caution and professional laxity took over; the Pantegonian Plesiosaur vanished without an official investigation. But many investigators believe there still may be some sort of strange beastie swimming in the waters of some remote lake.

Pantegonia – like many other areas of South America – is a strange, isolated land. The southern tip of the continent, Pantegonia is a mountainous region with wild terrain that is isolated. There are vast stretches of Pantegonia that are uninhabited. It is just the sort of place where you might expect to find a Plesiosaur or some other bizarre throwback to another age.

Fawcett believed an area of Pantegonia was inhabited by the degenerated descendants of a lost white race. While a number of scientists scoffed at Fawcett's admittedly bizarre ideas about hidden cities and lost tribes, few bothered to accompany the explorer into the jungles. Fawcett was a calm, intel-

ligent man who maintained accurate journals about his activities in South America.

Fawcett's memoirs were edited and published by his son after the explorer vanished in the jungles. He reported that in the Madidi region of Bolivia there were rumors of lake monsters. ". . . Enormous tracks have been found," wrote Col. Fawcett, "and the Indians there talk of a huge creature described at times half-submerged in the swamps. . . Certain tracks have been found that belong to no known animal. . . huge tracks far greater than anything we know."

Fawcett speculated that these beasts were "possibly a primeval monster like those reported in other parts of the continent." He felt that the area he traveled during his 1909 expedition might be a "lost world" for these creatures. This was the borderland between Bolivia and Brazil, a region that included the Ricardo Franco mountain range and the river Verde. Fawcett said:

"Time and the foot of man had not touched these summits. They stood like a lost world, forested to their tops, and imagination could picture the last vestiges there of an age long vanished. Isolated from the battle with unchanging conditions, monsters from the dawn of man's existence might still roam those heights unchallenged, imprisoned by unscalable cliffs."

The Bolivian Caupolican which Fawcett referred to in his London Lecture is located east of the Andean mountains in northwest portions of that country. It is dotted with near impenetrable swamps and towering mountains. The entire region is covered with a vast growth of vegetation. It has the look of some throwback to the Mesozoic Age. Many expeditions have vanished in this region, the victims of natural enemies or the unfriendly Indian tribes.

Indians in this area are among the most savage

known anywhere. The Guaraya tribes discourage visitors to their land and, once an expedition has left the villages on the fringe of the forest, their members are often attacked from ambush. In the days prior to the Spanish conquest, the Incan Emperor Yuanqui had plans of conquering the Indians. He sent an army of 40,000 men into the area. They built two massive stone fortresses as outposts. A large aqueduct was constructed by slave labor. The Emperor ordered a wide "Incan Highway" to be built between the forts and his nearest town. The proud Incan military machine was routed by the Indians. The forts and roads were abandoned and, today, lie somewhere under the vast vegetation.

Col. Fawcett was exploring this area during his 1909 trip to South America. Bound by the Rio Madeira and Rio Beni rivers, the 35,000 square miles of land had not seen a white man in five hundred years. Fawcett entered the region as the leader of a Bolivian Boundary Commission. He called the land "an abominable forest, dripping with moisture, the home of malaria and deadly diseases of an obscure South American type" that were unknown to physicians in the outer world.

While Fawcett's expedition tried to move beyond the rivers, they encountered incredible difficulty. A scientist, James Murray, was afflicted with a disease caused by the *Sututus*, a jungle maggot. He was rushed back to a small village where he lay feverish for several weeks before recovering. As Fawcett pushed further into the region, he discovered animals and plants that white men had never seen before.

Fawcett wrote:

"I have hinted at the romances which await the explorer if he will leave the rivers and get away from the rubber districts into the more remote forests. They are not exaggerated. These are strange beasts

and weird insects for the naturalists, and reason, at any rate, for not condemning as a myth the existence of mysterious, white Indians. There are rumors of forest pygmies and old ruins. Nearer civilization there are lost mines. . . tracks of strange beasts, huge and unrecognized. . . Nothing whatever is known of the country a few hundred yards from the river banks. . . I could tickle the appetite of the romantic with more; but it is not definite enough to warrant courting a reputation for traveler's tales from the incredulous folk who sit at home and think they know all that is to be known about the world."

After his lecture in London, Col. Fawcett and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle were introduced and became friends. Fawcett was enthusiastic about the wonders to be found in the Bolivian Caupolican. He talked enthusiastically about his future expeditions and supplied data for Doyle's new novel, *The Lost World.*

Doyle had been on a vacation cruise in the Mediterranean Sea prior to this when he spotted what may have been a sea serpent. "It was a curious creature in appearance, quite unusual," Doyle frequently told his friends. "It was about four to four-and-a-half feet in diameter with a long neck and very large flippers."

"What was it?" Fawcett asked after hearing the story.

"I fretted over that for some time," admitted Doyle. "Then a friend of mine sent me a photograph of a 'baby plesiosaur' that had been caught in nets over in Australia. This was exactly what I had seen during our cruise."

Fawcett also told Doyle of Indian belief in giant ape-like creatures who prowled the jungles. These monsters, perhaps a South American version of Big Foot or the abominable snowman, have been mentioned as far back as early Spanish writings. With

these ingredients and an active imagination, Doyle wrote *The Lost World.* Doyle's fictional explorers journey into the boondocks of South America where they encounter ape-men, wild beasts and adventure in a prehistoric terrain. Summerlee, one of Doyle's characters, cries out in the novel: "The plesiosaurus! A fresh water plesiosaurus! That I should live to see such a sight! We are blessed, my dear challenger, above all zoologists since the world began."

In 1922 many of the world's scientists wondered if nature was imitating art. Several wire services carried a story concerning a plesiosaur that was supposed to be in a lake in Patagonia. Like many other areas of South America, Pantegonia is an isolated, remote region that is largely uninhabited. The wild, rough mountains and the dense forests prevent this area from being explored or settled. Located on the most southerly tip of the continent, Pantegonia is just the sort of place where you might expect to discover a living prehistoric beast.

The saga of the Pantegonian Plesiosaur started in early 1922, according to the July edition of the *Scientific American* for that year. The director of the Buenos Aires zoo, Dr. Clementi Onelli, heard about a gold prospector who was searching for a motherlode in the Chebut region of Pantegonia. The prospector, an American, was camped on the shores of a lake high in the mountains when he stumbled across some huge animal tracks. The prospector cautiously followed the tracks, recognizing they belonged to a large heavy animal. After following the trail for some time, the prospector saw the tracks end at the edge of the lake.

The American was about to return to his camp when he saw a creature rise up out of the water.

"I was really astonished," the prospector, Martin Sheffield, told newsmen later. "I saw in the middle

of the lake an animal with a huge neck like a swan, and the movements made me suppose the beast to have a body like that of a crocodile."

Clementi Onelli accompanied Martin Sheffield to the news conference with Buenos Aires reporters. "Martin is an old friend of mine," said Onelli. "I trust him explicitly. Naturally, he is not a scientific man, but I have no doubt that he saw a large and strange animal with a swan-like neck swimming in the lake as he asserts."

"What kind of animal would it be?" asked a reporter.

"What has been described is a good description of a plesiosaur," Onelli answered.

The reporters looked puzzled. "What's that?" a reporter inquired.

"A prehistoric beast that we know existed in the past," said Onelli. "Most of the palaeontologists are familiar with the creature."

A reporter asked, "Have you heard of other reports from this region?"

"I obtained one first hand many years ago," Onelli replied. "In 1897 I was traveling in Patagonia. I met a farmer who lived on the edge of White Lake. He claimed there was a large animal living in the waters there. At night, the farmer swore the animal could be heard walking along the beach. He said this was as if a heavy wagon without wheels was being dragged over the sand and pebbles."

A newsman asked, "Has this farmer ever seen the beast?"

"He claimed it was possible on a moonlit night," answered Onelli. "His view of the monster has been limited to when it was swimming in the lake on a brilliantly illuminated night. On those occasions when he did see the creature, he saw a serpentine neck moving along at a great distance above the lake

surface. This might be similar to Sheffield's description of a swan-like neck."

A reporter inquired, "Did he try to approach the beast?"

Onelli shook his head. "The creature always made a quick dive beneath the surface whenever it heard any noise."

The news conference continued with another reporter asking about other monster reports. "There was an engineer over here a few years ago," said the zoo director. "This was back in 1902 when Chile and Argentina were involved in a border dispute. He was a member of the Boundary Demarcation Commission which was charged with settling the argument. The engineer was following a river which the natives called the Rio Tamango. He rounded a bend in the river and came upon the dead body of a huge creature. From his description I feel this might have been a dead plesiosaur. In that same area, the engineer found the tracks of another large animal. He didn't have a camera with him so there were no photographs taken of the beast. He was too far from civilization and without refrigeration facilities to try and bring back a part of the beast."

Scientific reaction to Onelli's alleged Patagonian Plesiosaur was swift and critical. Dr. F.A. Lucas, director of the New York Museum of Natural History, sniffed his disapproval. "The nearer one gets to these reports the less people know about them," he told newsmen. "Nobody seems to know how these wild rumors get started." *Scientific American* magazine held "scornful skepticism" at the idea of an "ante-deluvian monster" being found alive and well in the lower reaches of Argentina.

The March 16, 1922, edition of the *New York Times* published a story about Onelli claiming the "plesiosaur" was a "giant armadillo." This seems

unlikely because the Argentina zoo director stuck with the plesiosaur theory in his other interviews. As the controversial plesiosaur came during the start of the roaring twenties, the world's newspapers were demanding sensational reports on any subject. Yellow journalism was at its height and crews of foreign correspondents were rushed to Argentina.

Early in March, Clementi Onelli held another news conference. He announced that a well-known film company planned to finance an expedition to find the Patagonian plesiosaur. In return, the movie maker would be given exclusive rights to show the film around the world. A few days later, the zoo director told reporters the film offer had fallen through.

"Does this mean the expedition is off?" asked a newsman from London.

"We're going ahead and financing by public subscription," said Onelli. "We need 2,000 pesos to get outfitted and send men into the field."

Within a week, the zoo director had received 3,000 pesos and the expedition left Buenos Aires on March 23, 1922, under the direction of Jose Cihagi, superintendent of the zoo. As they headed for the lake, Onelli announced they were searching for a family of plesiosaurs. "We don't feel this is some type of creature endowed with immortality," he explained. "We're looking for a colony that may have survived there since prehistoric times."

Getting to the lake where the plesiosaur allegedly lived was no easy journey. The expedition went by boat to Mauquen, where their large bore elephant guns, ropes and dynamite was loaded onto a truck for the trip to Barlioche. When the road ended, they put their equipment on pack horses and rode into the isolated Chebut region.

Several Argentinians reacted angrily when press dispatches mentioned the expedition included

dynamite and guns with their supplies. The president of the Argentine Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals called his press conference. "There is a state law that forbids the hunting and killing of rare animals," snapped the president. "The government has shown dreadful judgment in allowing this expedition to hunt for the poor creature. If this alleged plesiosaur actually exists, it should have the full protection of the law."

Despite the legalistic furor back in Buenos Aires, the expedition planned to continue their search. They were stopped when the Governor of Chebut denied a permit to hunt the creature. An article in the April 14, 1922, edition of the *Chicago Tribune* reported "the expedition of scientists and near scientists is enjoying a holiday, encamped in the beautiful lake region known as the Argentine Switzerland at the expense of the schoolteachers, letter-carriers and other workers who donated funds which made the expedition possible."

The April 6, 1922 edition of the *Toronto Globe* carried an article entitled: "Local Man Lays Claim to Having Caught Sight of Gigantic Plesiosaur." Beneath this headline, George Garret of Toronto said that he had been living in Argentina around Lake Najuel Huapi in 1910 and saw the creature. The story read:

"So far as I know, my son and I are the only white men who have ever caught sight of one of these antediluvian monsters. It was about the year 1910. Having pioneered a peninsula on that most beautiful lake, Najuel Huapi, I was appointed manager of a newly formed company.

"At that time I speak of, the government engineer was surveying the property, and my son and I were navigating him and his staff of assistants around the wild, rugged coasts of the peninsula. We had put the engineer, his men and instruments ashore, and were

sailing about for pleasure, with about half a gale of wind. We were beating windward up an inlet called 'Pass Coytrue,' which bounded the peninsula. This inlet was about five miles in length, a mile or so in width, and of an unfathomable depth. Just as we were near the rocky shore of the peninsula, before tacking, I happened to look astern towards the center of the inlet, and, to my great surprise, I saw about a quarter of a mile to leeward, an object which appeared to be 15 or 20 feet in diameter, and perhaps six feet above the water.

"Having time only for a glimpse, as the boat was now racing within a few yards of the rocks, I told my son to keep his eyes on the curiosity while I tacked our somewhat cumbersome craft. This was accomplished with all speed, and in the twinkling of an eye we were tearing towards the spot where the object had been, but there was not the slightest trace of it in the clear waters of the lake. On mentioning my experience to my neighbors they said the Indians often spoke of immense water animals they had seen from time to time."

While Canadians were absorbing Mr. Garrett's straight-forward and unimbellished account, the Argentinian expedition was finding that plesiosaur hunting was a risky venture. They searched lake shores in the Esquel region, then selected a single lake for detailed investigation. After exploding several sticks of dynamite to make the creature rise, the expedition was abandoned due to approaching cold weather. The hapless adventurers returned to Buenos Aires in late April and the Patagonian plesiosaur vanished from the news. Everyone decided that if the creature ever existed, it had left for parts unknown as *Scientific American* put it.

This brief but exciting fiasco did not dim the activities of South American monster hunters. The

Onelli expedition collected data on monsters during their journey and heard about a creature that allegedly had been sighted in Lake Lago Lacar. This lake is located in the northly Andean cordilleras and there are periodic reports of sightings of a lake long necker. There have been a series of reports about a humped creature in the lake, but no evidence has been produced by any of the sighters.

The first person to chronicle a monster in South America was Jean de Larius or de Lery in his *Historia d'un voyage au Brazil en 1556-58*. Walking in the woods with two companions, Larius told of not having a guide as he wandered into a deep valley. A modernized translation reads:

". . . Hearing the noise of a certain beast moving towards us, supposing it to be timid and harmless, we proceeded on our journey. We were secure and quiet in mind. After a few more paces, we saw a lizard on a hill. His body was larger than a mans and he was five or six feet in length. He was covered all over with white scales that were rough like oyster shells. Holding one of his forefeet aloft, he began to observe us with his shining eyes.

"Wherefore, we were astonished. . . because we had only our swords by our sides. The swords could not greatly harm the monster because of such hard scales. Fearing that we might lose if we fled, because the monster would be swifter than us, we fearfully watched the creature and stood in our places. But after that the prodigious lizard beheld us for a quarter of an hour with his mouth open. Because it was exceedingly hot weather (for it was a cleere day, almost at noon), the lizard made a great groan that we might easily hear it and he went unto the top of a mountain with great noise. We heard a crashing and breaking of twigs and boughs like a deer would have made running through the woods. We did not pursue

him and gave thanks to our God and went on our intended journey. My companions were of the opinion that the lizard was delighted with the sight of a man. It seemed to me that beholding us pleased the monster so much because we were so tormented (by fear) with his presence."

Jean de Larius had other problems during his Brazilian adventures. The expedition he joined was led by Durand de Villegaigon, a naval officer who took over an island in the bay off Rio de Janeiro for the Huguenots who were being persecuted in France. Villegaigon was actually a secret follower of the Guises, who were Catholic. Larius had to leave Brazil to save his life. He sailed in a ship with rotten timbers and very little food on board. Before the voyage ended, Larius and his fellow voyagers were compelled to eat rats and mice to sustain themselves. After the rodents were devoured, they boiled their boots for food. Fortunately, they landed in a French port controlled by the Huguenots. Villegaigon had given the ship's master a letter that was supposed to ensure their safety in a Catholic port. The letter actually advised the Guises to execute Larius and his companions if they landed in Catholic territory.

Several early explorers have told of finding serpentine monsters depicted on statues and plaques found in old ruins. A flying dragon was found near Chimbote, northern Peru. A sea serpent or lake monster was vividly shown on another piece of pre-Columbian art found in the same region. This water monster was shown with an elongated head, jaws with teeth, and a body covered with scales. A third serpent was unearthed at Chimbote a few years later, depicting a scaly body, armored tail, and a serpentine head. Observers claim these artful monsters were drawn by an unknown tribe that preceded the Incan conquest of Peru.

J. Lloyd Stephens made several journeys into Central America. During his travels there in 1838, Stephens wrote of finding the ruins of a mysterious race known as the Mams. The site was near Huehuetenango, Guatemala in extremely wild terrain. Stephens reported that he found the skeleton of an unknown animal on a river bank. The bones were exceptionally large, indicating the creature had been gigantic in size. Several writers have suggested the Stephens skeleton was a water monster embedded in mud during some ancient upheaval.

Dr. Earl Flindt discovered pictures of water monsters near Lake Managua, Nicaragua, during the last century. Some ancient and unknown race had chiseled glyphs of these serpentine creatures into a solid rock wall. Writing about his discovery, Flindt said:

". . . These ancient men saw the first eruptions of volcanoes when they were close to their feet, and on opposite sides. They, with the animals, passed over the lava immediately, when it was moistened with rain, and left imprints in the plastic mass which soon hardened and preserved them. Four subsequent eruptions soon followed, as shown by four barely perceptible seams. A repose of long duration followed, when vegetation crept slowly over the vegetable debris. Forests sprang up. . . We pass over the hills. . . to a strip of land unmoved by convulsions, and find a cave filled with sandstone, not suddenly like its neighbors, but soon after by the wash from their graves. We remove the rock and copy the records on the inner roof made by these ancient men of the Tertiary times. They are faithful delineations of *animal monsters* and other objects or signs. Some are cut at sharp angles with great skill, indicating a people capable of protecting their feet as they walked over the tufa. No skeletons of these great monsters were found. One vertebra was all that we could add. . . Its diameter is

about ten inches. . . Nicaragua is too far removed to awaken scientific attention. . . Here, we wander alone among the hills and vainly try to impress our convictions on others."

Dr. Flindt was at Rivas, Nicaragua, when he wrote these words on the Fourth of April, 1888. He was convinced the remarkable fossilized footprints captured in the lava were from an ancient, highly skilled race who co-existed with saurian creatures in ages past. The Tertiary period goes back from 2-million to 63-million years.

In the nineteen thirties, a mysterious amphibian monster popped up in Paraguay where the Rio Paraguay reaches the Gran Charco region. North of the community of Conception, ranchers complained that a huge water monster was dragging their cattle into the river and devouring the unfortunate beasts. *El buey jagua* was the local term for the monster, allegedly a lake or river monster of some type. Indians claimed the monster lived in *"el pantano del diablo"* – "The Devil's Swamp." This is a vast swampy marsh that lies about two hundred miles north of Conception.

The Monster was described by the Indians as being as round as a man, brownish in color with a white underside. The creature was said to be about twenty feet long with a tail extending beyond that measure. The thick, sturdy tail was said to be used as a weapon. The amphibious monster supposedly waited near a swamp for its prey to come down a path. Then, the creature leaped out and surprised horses, cattle, and men.

The Spanish National Archives contain many unpublished manuscripts from the time of their conquest of the new world. Among these musty files is the copy of a rare account of life in the new world by Tomas Lopez Medel. In *Relaction of 1812,*

the Spanish author tells of visiting Yucatan and the sacrificial well at Chichen Itza, they sometimes saw a fierce and frightful dragon which they took for a monstrous sort of crocodile, and who came out from these deep waters to receive what had been given him. And certainly considering the nature of the place no dragon or crocodile could live there, the nature of the water opposing it. . .

Another unpublished manuscript was written by a Señor Palacio in 1576. Forwarded to the King of Spain, the manuscript tells of a lake near San Salvador in Old Guatemala. Palacio, a lawyer, was traveling through the region when he heard about a frightening serpent in the lake. "The old Indians claim there is a giant serpent in the lake that is of prodigious size," he reported. "The chief of the village said he has seen this serpent which, by his own account, measures at least fifty feet in length. I do not know if these facts are well authenticated because no others have said they have seen it. But the idea is widespread in this part of the world."

In all of the world's history there has never been a quest for treasure like the Spanish search for El Dorado – the legendary city of gold. One of the early expeditions was led by Nicholas Fedremann, who commanded 300 infantrymen and 200 cavalry on the El Dorado trail. The Conquistadors left Coro, Venezuela in 1534 to find the golden city for His Royal Majesty, Charles V of Spain. In one of the most incredible sagas of endurance, Fedremann and his conquistadors traveled across fifteen hundred miles of wilderness before coming out on the plains near Bogota, Colombia, five years later.

Wild animals attacked and killed Fedremann's horses. Jaguars killed his Indian bearers and devoured some of his soldiers. Sick and near starvation, the group was reduced by some two hundred men who

wandered aimlessly in the South American jungles. When the group was high in the mountains, seeking a passage out of a jungle valley, they discovered traces of an ancient city. Friar Pedro Simon, the author of a book on the journey, told of a saurian type of monster that was encountered in the hunt for El Dorado. In the book, *Las Noticias de las Conquistas de Tierra Firme en las Indias Occidentales,* the friar tells of how Fedremann's group had stopped high in the mountains to hunt for food.

"They had to halt and look for food in that wild region," wrote the Friar. "And some soldiers had not gone far into the country when they came across some people who lived in a village. Taking food from one and the other, they quickly returned to the camp, where Fedremann resolved to find the cause of the ruins of the settlements. And inquiring of the Indians brought to the camp, they said there had been a fierce and savage animal with many heads, bred in that river, and so fearless and valiant that little by little he had destroyed the people of the villages, which occasioned them to withdraw from the neighborhood of those waters where he had his customary haunt. And some went where the soldiers had found them, and others to other parts. The soldiers found no difficulty in believing this, since some amongst them had heard the valiant and horrible roarings of this monster. . . Others affirmed they had seen him with their own eyes and judged him to have several heads and certified that he was a fierce and frightful monster. Some said that he was a snake, others that he was a dragon."

Chapter XIII

PRESENT-DAY BEHEMOTHS

"My attention was drawn to a large brown fin or frill sticking up out of the water, dark seaweed-brown in color, somewhat crinkled at the edge. It was about six feet in length and projected from eighteen inches to two feet from the water. I could see, under the water to the rear of the frill, the shape of a considerable body – a great head and neck did not touch the frill in the water, but came out of the water in front of it – the neck appeared to be the thickness of a slight man's body, and from seven to eight feet was out of the water. The head had a very turtle-like appearance, as had also the eye. . . It moved its head from side to side in a peculiar manner."

This statement appeared in a scientific paper presented to the Zoological Society of Britain by E.G.B. Meade-Waldo on June 19, 1906. The sighting took place when Mr. Meade-Waldo and his fellow scientist, M.J. Nicoll, were on board Lord Crawford's yacht, *Valhalla*, for a scientific cruise. The ship was about twenty miles off the mouth of the Parahiba River in Brazil on December 7, 1905, when the two men made the sighting. Suppressing their astonishment

at the creature's unusual appearance, the two Britishers grabbed their binoculars and watched the unusual animal swim by the ship.

The two men, both holding degrees in zoology and highly respected in their field, watched as the sea serpent made a large wave as it moved past the ship. Later, Meade-Waldo elaborated on his feelings at the sight of such a large, unknown ocean creature. "We were so astonished at the time that neither of us could speak!" he reported. "After the creature passed, we rushed down in the cabin where Lord Crawford was resting. He offered to stop the yacht if it would do any good. As we were making about fourteen knots, and the creature was traveling at a relatively rapid pace, we decided it would not be much use."

M.J. Nicoll was also impressed by the sighting. "This creature was an example, I consider, of what has been so often reported, for want of a better name, as the 'great sea serpent.' I feel sure, however, that it was not a reptile that we saw, but a mammal. It is, of course, impossible to be certain of this, but the general appearance of the creature, especially the soft, almost rubber-like fin, gave one that impression."

On January 13, 1852, Captain Jason Seabury, master of a New England whaling ship, *Monongahela*, claimed he brought his telescope to focus on a monstrous ocean creature thrashing about in the water. Some investigators have labeled this sighting as a hoax. Others, such as Loch Ness monster hunter Tim Dinsdale, believes there may be a germ of truth in the incident. Skeptics claim the report is too dramatic to be true. As the case assumed classic stature in the last century, it is presented here as either true or false and the reader can make his personal determination.

Captain Seabury noticed that the great monster was struggling in great agony in the water. Three longboats were sent over the side of the *Monongahela* to kill the beast and end its misery. As the whaler's harpoons struck home in the beast's body, a gigantic head about ten feet in length rose out of the ocean and lunged at the whaling boats.

Two of the whaling boats capsized within a few moments. The sailors were tossed into the sea, swimming desperately for their ship and other boats to avoid the monster's huge jaws. Finally, harpoons were secured in the writhing body. Heavy line was secured to the side of the ship, leading out to the harpoons. The monster dove for the bottom and almost a thousand feet of line went out before the dive ended. The whalers waited for the body to rise to the surface. When it seemed lodged on the bottom, they attempted to haul the carcass out of the water. Straining mightily, the whalers were unable to drag the beast up to their ship.

By now, a sister ship from New Bedford harbor had pulled alongside the *Monongahela*. The new arrival, the *Rebecca Sims*, was under the command of Captain Samuel Gavitt. The two ships pulled alongside and masters and crewmen watched the taut, heavy line leading down into the depths. They discussed the unusual creature with much speculation, wild apprehension and wonderment.

The following morning, the gigantic carcass had popped to the surface. The leviathan was slightly larger in length than the *Monongahela*, a vessel that measured around one hundred feet from bow to stern. Captain Seabury reported the gigantic sea creature had a body that measured about fifty feet in diameter at its widest portion. The neck, which was about ten feet around, ended with a huge, alligator-like head that was estimated to be around

ten feet in length. The adventuresome whalers inspected the head and counted ninety-four teeth in the massive jaws. Each of the saberlike teeth were three inches long, hooked backward in the terrible mouth like rows of teeth found in a snake. The whalers reported the body was grayish brown in appearance; there was a light – almost white – stripe running the total length of the body.

Always a practical man, Captain Seabury decided to boil down the creature as if it was a huge whale. Unfortunately, the leviathan of the depth proved to be a disappointment. Instead of a vast amount of oil and blubber, the ship's rendering crew discovered the monster's body was primarily tough skin.

"There's just no oil in the carcass," complained the ship's chief renderer. "We might as well throw the carcass away."

Captain Seabury nodded. "Take the head from the body," he ordered. "I want the head salted down and preserved in a solution of brine."

"There's no oil in the head," protested the renderer.

"I know that, mister," snapped Captain Seabury. "I also know that most people have a way of heaping abuse and ridicule on any captain who reports he's sighted a sea serpent. Mister, we're going to sail into New Bedford harbor with the proof in a barrel of brine."

While his men were preserving the horrible trophy, Captain Jason Seabury sat in his cabin and wrote out a dramatic account of the death of the beast. He also included a lengthy description of the beast's body and measurements. This report was given to the captain of the *Rebecca Sims* for delivery when he reached port.

Unfortunately, Captain Seabury should have also given the preserved head to his fellow captain. The *Monongahela* failed to make the return journey back

to New Bedford with the pickled monster head. Several researchers claim the name board of the *Monongahela* was found in the Pacific ocean several years later, off shore from Umnak Island in the Aleutian chain.

In reading about the *Monongahela* sea serpent in a condensed account several years ago, I wondered about Captain Seabury's sanity. Why would a sea captain order his men to tackle a dying monster? A wounded or dying beast is extremely dangerous, lashing out at anyone or anything that approaches it. It would appear to be a foolish move to risk several longboats of crewmen on an attack against the creature.

Later, I obtained a complete transcript of Captain Seabury's report sent back on the other ship. The sighting was made in tropical Pacific waters. Immediately, Captain Seabury ordered his men to the longboats.

The sailors hesitated.

"There's no use lowering the boats for that thing," protested the first mate.

Captain Seabury's report explained his reasons for the attack.

". . . I urged them with all the eloquence I possessed," he wrote, "telling them there were but few who believed in the existence of a sea serpent. I explained that a wish had been expressed that a whale ship might fall in with one of them – that if we did not attack him, and should tell of seeing him when we got home, we should be laughed at and derided – and the very first question would be: 'why didn't you try him?' I told them our courage was at stake – our manhood, even the credit of the whole American whale fishery, and concluded by appealing to their cupidity – holding out that we might possibly get him to some southern port. 'I do not order any

one of you to go to the boats,' I said, 'but who will volunteer?' Let me say to their credit, every American in the ship stepped out at once, followed by all but one native and one Englishman."

Later in his report, Captain Seabury gave very exact proportions for the monster. He wrote:

". . . The bones of the lower jaw are separate. . . One of the serpent's lungs was three feet longer than the other. . . It was a male; the length was 103 feet and 7 inches; 19 feet 1 inch around the neck; 24 feet 6 inches around the shoulders; and the largest part of the body, which appeared somewhat distended, 49 feet 4 inches. . . . On examining the skin we found, to our surprise, that the body was covered with blubber like that of a whale, but it was only four inches thick. The oil was clear as water, and burnt nearly as fast as oil of turpentine. We cut the snake up, but had great difficulty and had to flense him. The body would not roll, and the blubber was so very elastic, that when stretched twenty feet by the blocks, it would, when cut off, shrink to five or six feet. . . The heart I preserved in liquor, and one of the eyes, but the head, not withstanding it is cool, emitted an offensive odor; but I am so near the coast now that I shall hold on to it as it is; unless it is likely to breed a distemper."

I have been able to discover that the *Monongehala* was an actual ship that sailed out of New Bedford. Photographs of the captain, and a sketch of the ship, were published in MD magazine in September, 1960. There is also said to be drawings and photographs of the captain and ship at the Old Dartmouth Historical Museum in New Bedford, Massachusetts. While skeptics have claimed this report was a hoax, we may yet discover that the report by Captain Seabury is one of the most factual reports on dissection of a sea serpent.

When World War One broke out, seamen around the world started scanning the ocean's surface for periscopes. This was the first conflict in which submarines were used on an ocean-wide basis. It was perhaps inevitable that a sea monster would become involved with a German U-boat sometime during the conflict. The German navy had an armada of submarines scouring the North Atlantic ocean in 1915. The submarine *U-28* was commanded by Georg Gunther Freiherr von Forstner. After the conflict, he made a report on a torpedo incident that took place on July 30, 1915. He wrote:

". . . On that date our *U-28* torpedoed the British steamer *Iberian* (5,233 tons) carrying a rich cargo in the North Atlantic. The steamer, which was about 600 feet long, sank quickly, the bow sticking almost vertically in the air, towards the bottom a thousand fathoms or more below. When the steamer had been gone for about 25 seconds, there was a violent explosion at a depth which it was impossible for us to know, but which we can reckon, without risk of being far out, at about 500 fathoms. A little later pieces of wreckage, and among them a gigantic sea animal, writhing and struggling wildly, were shot out of the water to a height of 60 to 100 feet.

"At that moment, I had with me in the conning tower my officers of the watch, the chief engineer, the navigator, and the helmsman. Immediately, we drew one another's attention to this wonder of the sea. As it was not in Brockhaus nor in Brehm we were unable to make an identification of this specie. We did not have the time to make a photograph of the beast because it sank from our sight within 10 to 15 seconds. The beast was about 60 feet long. It had four limbs with large webbed feet and a very long tail that tapered back to a point.

"That the animal was driven up from the depths

appeared to me to be understandable. The explosion on the sinking *Iberian* must have created fantastic pressures beneath the surface. The beast, which was called an 'underwater crocodile,' was apparently shot upward by these tremendous pressures until it was thrown out of the water, gasping and terrified."

Another WWI encounter with a strange sea animal took place in May, 1917, when the armed merchant cruiser H.M.S. *Hilary* sailed under the British flag off the coast of Iceland. The commander of the *Hilary*, Captain F.W. Dean, R.N., wrote of the incident after the armistice. His account appeared in *Herbert Strang's Annual* – 1920, a British publication. His report said:

". . . Many a good yarn could be told of the adventures of those whose privilege it was to serve in the armed merchant cruisers which, during the greater part of the war, maintained the blockade of the Scottish coast to the Arctic line. With the title I have given to this account (*The Sea Serpent Again: A Yarn of the North Sea Patrol*), I naturally do not expect it to be believed, though it is in fact true to the last detail, as many of those who were serving in the *Hilary* during her last few days above the water can attest.

"After a stormy winter we enjoyed some wonderfully fine weather during May, 1917. On the morning of, I think, the 22nd the conditions were perfect – brilliant sunshine and not a cat's paw to ruffle the sea. Beyond the horizon to the northward of the peaks of Iceland could be seen the only breaks in our all-round view of the sea and sky.

"It was about 9 a.m. and I was sitting at the writing table in my cabin, which was immediately under the bridge, when a report was shouted down to me: 'Object on the starboard quarter.'

"In three seconds I was on the bridge, asking,

'Was it a periscope?'

" 'Not a periscope,' replied the officer of the watch.

" 'What is it?'

" 'It looks more like a living thing,' replied the officer of the watch, pointing at an object that at first glance suggested to my mind a tree trunk with only the knobby ends (from which branches and roots had been cut) visible. A careful look through my glasses, however, made it clear that the thing was alive, and that the 'knobby ends' were in fact the head and dorsal fin.

"We never missed a chance in those days to do a bit of anti-submarine practice and it at once struck me that here was a good target. I turned to First-lieutenant Charles M. Wray and told him to get our three 6-pounder gun crews up. Each crew in turn should have a run.

"Like most of the armed merchant cruisers on that patrol, we had, in addition to our heavier guns, two 6-pounders placed on each side, just abaft of the bridge. Part of our defense scheme was to have three gun crews, one of which was always on watch between these two guns, ready to close up instantly starboard or port, according to which side a submarine might be sighted.

"Before taking the liberty of using the stranger as a target, I thought it would be good to have a closer look at it. I told Lt. Harris, the navigator, to turn the ship round and head for it. In due course we approached the object end on, and when we were about a cable's length from it, it quietly moved out of our way. We passed it about thirty yards off on our starboard side, getting a very good view of it while doing so.

"The head was about the shape of, but somewhat larger than that of, a cow. There were no observable protrusions such as horns or ears; it was black except

for the front of the face, which could be clearly seen to have a strip of whitish flesh, very like a cow has, between its nostrils.

"As we passed the head raised itself up two or three times, apparently to get a good look at the ship. From the back of the head to the dorsal fin no part of the creature showed above the water, but the top edge of the neck was just level with the surface. Its snake-like movements could be clearly seen.

"The dorsal fin appeared like a black triangle. When the creature was end on, this fin was seen to be very thin and apparently flabby. The upper part turned over sometimes like the top of a terrier's ear when cocked. The fin was estimated to be about four feet high when in the position highest out of the water.

"I was anxious to get as good an estimate as possible of the length – of the neck, i.e., the distance from the head to the fin. I asked my officers to each note the length and we compared with the following results:

"First lieutenant – 'The length of one of our boats.' This would be around 28 feet.

"Navigator – 'Not less than fifteen feet.'

"Officer of the Watch – 'Length of one of our boats.'

"Myself – 'twenty feet.'

"From this, it may be assumed that the true length of the neck was probably not less than twenty feet. Assuming that the dorsal fin would be just behind the junction of the neck and body, the total length of the creature would be about sixty feet.

"The creature did not seem to be the least alarmed by the presence of the ship. It continued to bask on the surface, now sinking down till only the tip of its nose and fin were visible, and then rising again until the whole head and the fin were above the

water to a height of four feet.

"The ship was steaming at twelve knots all the time, so the creature was soon 1,000 yards astern. We then turned around, and I gave the orders when the range was approximately 1200 yards, for the first gun's crew to fire five rounds rapid.

"Their best show was some twenty yards off being a hit. The creature ignored the performance entirely.

"The second gun's crew was now closed up. The helm was put over and the range opened again to about 1200 yards and the five rapid rounds were repeated. This time two shots seemed to fall very close to the object, but still failed to disturb its equanimity.

"The third gun's crew was now closed up.

"I ordered them to fire five rounds rapid.

"The first shot fell very close to the creature. The second was a clean hit and produced, at once, a furious commotion, which reminded me more than anything else of a bather lying on his back in the smooth water and kicking out with all his force to splash the water. However, the commotion on this occasion was on a vastly larger scale. It continued for perhaps three seconds and then stopped.

"We saw no more of the creature although we passed close to the spot where it was last seen. I gave orders for the ship to be put back on her patrol course. I left the bridge telling the navigator to make a brief notation of the whole situation in the log.

"It was soon after 7 a.m. on the second day after we spotted that creature that brother Hun got us. A sitting shot we gave him on that bright and sunny morning. . . (but we were torpedoed). When our ship began settling down, it became necessary to take to the boats. In due course, our poor old ship went under. We made for land, which was fifty miles away, and during the afternoon, we were all picked up by a

destroyer except one, who was found by a patrol drifter the next morning. I noticed when one of the boats came alongside the drifter that a small brown hand-bag was passed on board.

"A day or two later I was walking on the quarter deck when I asked my officers who the brown hand-bag belonged to, and was told it belonged to the officer of the watch. He was on duty during the sea serpent episode. This officer had been brought up at sea as a youngster by a captain who had an extensive knowledge of, and a firm belief in many of the superstitions. Apparently the officer had adopted some of the old captain's views. After we hit the sea serpent and I left the bridge I was told he made a fervent appeal that an entry not be made in the log.

"When the other officers said they must follow orders, the officer of the watch said: 'Well, that makes it a certainty anyhow. We shall never reach port again!'

"When he was relieved at the end of his watch he went to his cabin and packed his valuables for the coming sinking of our ship. I had never up to that day heard that any bad luck was associated with the sighting of a sea serpent.

"Now, if you ask me 'Are you superstitious about seeing a sea serpent?' I can only reply 'Well, if I ever find myself at sea again in command of a ship, and anything of this sort was sighted, I will leave it alone *and make no entry in the log!*"

By now, the reader is probably wondering about lake monsters and sea serpents. Skeptics may be musing, "So a lot of seamen used to claim they made sightings of sea serpents. A lot of these sightings took place a long time ago. People were more superstitious in those days. They were even quite ignorant about many things that we understand today. With so much shipping going on today, we would have captured a

sea serpent if such a creature actually existed."

The skeptics would only be partially correct. Seamen still report seeing strange creatures in the oceans, often of incredible proportions and serpentine form. True, there has been a considerable increase in ocean traffic during the past two decades. But most ships are now operated by computers and other automatic navigational devices. A huge oil tanker may be sailing down a well traveled sea lane without a human at the helm. The captain and crew may be sleeping, or doing chores, while the computer steers the ship toward port. A convoy of sea serpents could swim past these behemoth tankers without being sighted.

However, we can expect a breakthrough sometime in the near future. There are numerous men who are devoting their full time to chasing down a sea serpent or lake monster. They're searching for concrete evidence that Nessie truly exists in Loch Ness. They're following sea serpent reports around the world, hopeful of someday soon having a specimen for display in an aquarium or zoo. If the reports on the size of these strange sea animals are true, we'll need some vast tanks to hold these monsters.

To monster hunters, the sea serpent is very much alive. They follow reports of strange creatures and, surprisingly, find that sightings are as numerous as ever. As an example, two fishermen were casting off the City Island bridge near the Bronx, New York, in late March, 1969. They quickly forgot their angling pastime when a giant, unidentified sea monster moved into a deep channel used by oil tankers traveling up the Hutchison river.

"It was bigger than anything I've ever seen," reported the first fisherman.

"It was huge," said his companion. "It was black and gray in color and covered with what appeared

to be slime."

Harbor police quickly launched a search for the elusive creature. Although they scoured the waters around the bridge, they returned to port without sighting the creature. They were about ready to give the two fishermen a blood alcohol test when another report came in. The second sighting took place in Little Neck Bay, Queens.

"I couldn't identify it," reported an elderly fisherman. "But whatever it was, it was larger than a whale."

"It was out in the bay about an hour ago," said a young male angler. "My buddies and I all saw it. It was the biggest thing I ever saw!"

Sightings were made in the next few days by other fishermen. Harbor police began to wonder if New York was being invaded by sea serpents. Then, the sightings dropped off. The creature had apparently gone back to its ocean haunts.

That same year, a blizzard of reports concerning sea serpents came pouring into the authorities in Hong Kong. North American Newspaper Alliance reporters told of fourteen students from the University of Hong Kong who were spending a pleasant afternoon on an ocean beach near that Asian city. Suddenly, their carefree outing was interrupted by the appearance of a sea monster.

Benjamin Chae, one of the students, was closest to the water's edge. "I was startled to hear a crying noise out in the water," he said. "I thought at first that someone was drowning. I turned toward the sea and saw a big black creature staring at me. The thing had large green eyes."

One of the girls in the group saw the creature at that moment.

"I looked out at sea and there was this big black creature rising up out of the water," she said. "It was not more than twenty yards from the edge of

the beach. I yelled out that a *Kai Kwai* (sea devil) was out there. The other students came running up and everyone got a good look at the beast. It was about twenty to thirty feet in length. We were all impressed by the large green eyes."

Another member of the party informed Hong Kong newsmen that the creature was definitely not a fish. "This wasn't a shark or anything like that," he insisted. "This thing looked more like a serpentine monster. The thing that I found most remarkable was the crying noise. It made a loud wailing sound that made goose bumps pop out all over my body."

The Hong Kong harbor police patrolled the waters near the sighting for several days. The *Kai Kwai* proved to be as elusive as his New York cousin. Nothing was ever seen again of the crying black sea monster.

Sea serpent enthusiasts had a field day in 1969. Besides the New York and Hong Kong sightings, investigators were puzzled by a huge carcass that washed up on the beach during a storm. At first, the massive hulk appeared to be the carcass of some prehistoric creature.

After an examination, a marine biologist reported, "It's a creature that was apparently frozen in an iceberg during ancient times. When the iceberg broke away from wherever it was attached, it floated down into these tropical waters. The ice melted and the creature's body drifted up on the beach."

Two biologists at the Mexican navy's marine biology station near Tampico, Mexico, disputed this unusual, yet romantic, origin for the creature. After examining the carcass, they concluded the "monster" was nothing more than the body of a large sperm whale.

Dr. Ralph McCormick, also a biologist, was vacationing in Mexico when the carcass hit the news.

The English scientist disputed the findings of the naval biologists. After checking the carcass, McCormick told several newsmen that the creature was definitely not a sperm whale.

A reporter asked, "What is it?"

"I don't know," admitted McCormick.

"Could it be a sea serpent?" asked another reporter.

McCormick laughed. "Not hardly. I've heard all of the stories about very serpentine-like creatures being sighted by sailors. This carcass, as you have seen for yourselves, is far from serpent-like in appearance. It is more of a massive hulk."

"Then what is it?"

"I don't know," McCormick said again. "It is definitely not listed in any of the standard textbooks. Let's say it's an unidentified floating creature."

"Will you be doing further studies?" asked a reporter from a Mexican radio station.

"Absolutely not," answered Dr. McCormick. "My wife is already upset because I interrupted our vacation to view the creature. I'll leave the remaining work to your able scientists."

Unfortunately, scientists in Mexico never followed up on a careful examination of the creature. They pointed out that the carcass had been mutilated before washing ashore. The warm tropical sun was quickly turning the body into a torring mass. After a few days on the beach, cables were attached to the body. A boat and more than a hundred fishermen dragged the carcass back out to sea. The outgoing tide washed the carcass out to sea.

The behemoth vanished.

Chapter XIV

ALTERNATIVE ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS

. . . Lake monsters and sea serpents!

. . . Whispers, rumors and eyewitness accounts of saurian creatures rising out of the depths of our lakes and oceans!

. . . A pattern of sightings throughout the world indicating a family of creatures that are similar in size and appearance.

These are the ingredients of the mystery surrounding these leviathans of the deep. We might speculate that tomorrow, next week, or perhaps next year we will have solid evidence that these creatures exist. Modern technology has given us a remarkable advance in films and cameras. Sophisticated cameras, fast lenses, and high-speed film may yet allow us to record the journey of some lake monster swimming through his aquatic kingdom.

Sophistication has also been the mainstay of underwater tracking equipment. These electronic devices are extremely accurate in providing data – either on a scope or on a print-out page – of objects moving beneath the surface of lakes and rivers. Today, a

fisherman who wants to improve his chances in the sport will purchase a low-cost electronic "fish finder." Advanced versions of these electronic devices will enable the monster hunters to zero in on the Loch Ness creature and other lake leviathans. Some of this equipment has been used in the past with excellent results.

What can we expect to find when the creature is identified?

Naturally, we're presuming that reports from around the world are actual accounts without deliberate deception. We have also ruled out the possibility of mass hallucination. A hoax seems almost impossible because our reports go back for several centuries. A deceptive and deliberate hoax, as some observers have suggested is the case with the Loch Ness monster, implies a conspiratorial participation by a considerable number of people over a long span of time. It would seem inevitable that someone would expose the secret.

Tourism for a small Scottish town would be the motivation for a hoax. The *New York Herald Tribune* (23, ii, 34) speculated on just this sort of scenario. ". . . Our private investigators at Loch Ness have reported the curious, though perhaps irrelevant, circumstance that a large new resort hotel was opened on the shore of the lake about the time the monster was first extensively reported," said the newspaper.

Unfortunately, a resort hotel on the lake was a structure born in the fertile imagination of some unnamed journalist. If such a structure was erected on the lake, the construction and grand opening were held with absolute secrecy.

What may have set off this alleged expose was the influx of promoters onto the Loch Ness scene. Several different versions of the monster were printed on post cards that are still sold in stores and shops along

the lake. Some of these cards reproduced faithfully the often fuzzy photographs of the creature. But others went beyond the boundaries of photographic integrity, using superimposed images of "monsters" over lake scenes. While these faked postcards and pictures were purchased by naive tourists, no witness to the creature ever backed their integrity.

"The post cards were pretty crude during the early days," admitted a merchant who recalls selling them in his shop. "But they were not sold as actual photographs of the monster. They were produced to provide a little humor for tourists to mail back to their friends at home. I found the same type of post card in the States a few years ago during a visit there. At a petrol station in Wyoming, I purchased several cards that showed a single jack rabbit lying on a railroad car. I mailed several of these back to my relatives here. None of us ever believed that rabbits in Wyoming grew to those giant proportions. But it was a humorous idea."

Less humorous was some of the yellow journalism used by newspapers to boost circulation. On April Fool's Day, 1934, the *Berliner Illustrirte Zeitung* startled its unsuspecting readers with a photo feature on the Loch Ness monster. Using doctored photographs, the publication showed the "monster" being hauled out of the loch with a torpedo net suspended between two large tug boats. Another picture showed the gigantic creature on exhibition before a large crowd of people in Edinburgh, Scotland. The superimposed "monster" was larger than the huge crowd in the auditorium. Many a German reader accepted the prankish article as the absolute truth.

Some people have suggested that, while the monster is not a hoax, the sighters are victims of mass hallucination. Such a report was printed by the *Observer* in London (29, x, 33) from E.G. Boulenger, a director

of the English Zoological Society's Aquarium. In the London paper, Mr. Boulenger wrote:

". . . The case of the Monster of Loch Ness is worthy of our consideration, if only because it presents a striking example of mass hallucination. . . .

"For countless centuries a weird and eerie legend has centered around this great inland waterway.

". . . any person with the slightest knowledge of human susceptibility should therefore find no difficulty in understanding how the animal once being said to have been seen by a few persons, should have shortly revealed itself to many.

"In the present instance the possibility of the beast actually being some huge animal must be ruled out, since the loch was, until recently, isolated but for certain subterranean inlets. Today its extremities join the sea by well-supervised canals, in which a creature of any size would be apparent.

". . . The most likely, if disappointing, explanation is to be found in the wreckage of one kind and another often seen in the loch. A gnarled tree trunk or grass-topped mass of peat might, in the distance, suggest, under certain lighting conditions, a monster of heraldic design and titanic proportions. . . . Taking all of these considerations into account, it is safe to dismiss the creature as mere 'moonshine'. . . ."

Another critic of the Loch Ness controversy was Sir Arthur Keith. He also felt the sighters were suffering from mass hallucination. Writing in the *London Daily Mail* (3, i, 34), he stated:

". . . All the laymen who have visited Loch Ness to collect evidence at first hand lay great stress on the number of witnesses that can be produced. . . . Strange to say, it is just the great number of witnesses and the discrepancy of their testimony that have convinced professional zoologists that the Loch Ness monster is not a thing of flesh and blood.

"For, seeing that monstrosaurus has been seen by so many people, at so many times and in so many places, then concrete and unmistakable evidence of its existence should have been at our disposal long before now. A live hippopotamus or a dolphin could not hide itself in Loch Ness from prying human eyes for a week, to say nothing of . . . months.

"The only kind of being whose existence is testified by the scores of witnesses, and which never reaches the dissecting table, belongs to the world of spirit.

"I spent my boyhood on the banks of a river which flows into the Morar Firth. I know many men and women who had seen kelpies in a certain dark pool, not once but many times. Like the Loch Ness monster, kelpies could be seen but not touched. I did not believe in them then, and nothing since has happened to change my mind. I have come to the conclusion that the existence or nonexistence of the Loch Ness monster is not a problem for zoologists but for psychologists."

Sir Arthur Keith was a practical scientist and a man with little time for what he termed "nonsense." If the monster is out there in the loch, catch the darned beastie and bring it into the laboratory. We'll throw the carcass on the dissecting table, carve here, cut there and give you a report in a few weeks. Until then, don't bother me with mysteries.

Instances of mass hallucination are not uncommon. But the phenomenon appears to be short-lived. It does not persist for several centuries, nor for a decade. You also find that most cases of hallucination are confined to persons with close association with each other. A group of Malaysian school children may be afflicted with "dancing sickness" or a mild form of hysterical laughter. They're a unit of humanity in a close-knit relationship. You don't find the tourists visiting Malaysia coming down with the ailments.

A possible explanation for the sightings in Loch Ness could be a natural phenomenon such as a floating tree or some other inanimate object. Undoubtedly, a floating tree, log or barrel has been mistaken for the monster by some unsuspecting sighter. Water itself can also create an illusionary effect.

A letter to the editor of the *London Daily Telegraph* (14, xii, 34) reported on just such an illusion. Several people aboard a Norwegian passenger steamer were on deck when the craft was leaving a fjord. They became excited by a series of dark, round objects swimming close to shore and following the ship.

"Some passengers thought these three or four objects were seals," wrote the correspondent. "Others rejected the seal theory, on account of the regularity with which they kept in line, and plumped for a sea serpent.

"Eventually, it occurred to many of us that we were looking at a purely wave effect on the shore caused by the boat's motion. The absence of any connecting wave between the black objects and the boat would be due, probably, to the great depth of the water, which affects wave lengths, while the blackness would be the result of the shading effect of the steep southern wall of the fjord."

Another interesting piece of negative evidence was reported in a letter to the Ness Fishing Board by A. Campbell, a water bailiff at Ft. Augustus, Scotland. Dated October 28, 1933, the letter tells how Campbell was watching from one end of the loch at about nine-thirty one morning. ". . . The light was very uncertain," he wrote, "there being a fairly thick haze on the water. Along with this, the sun was shining directly in my eye through the mist, making visibility very bad.

"I had not been watching for more than a minute

before I noticed a strange object on the surface about six hundred yards from where I stood. It seemed to be about thirty feet above the surface of the loch. The creature, if such it was, seemed to be about thirty feet long. What I took to be the head was fully five feet above the surface of the loch. It seemed to be watching two drifters passing out of the canal and into Loch Ness. Whether it was my imagination or not, I could have sworn that it kept turning its head and also its body very quickly, in much the same way a cormorant (a species of aquatic bird) does on rising to the surface. I saw this for fully a minute, then the object vanished as if it had sunk out of sight. . . .

"Last Friday I was watching the loch at the same place and about the same time of day. The weather was almost identical – practically calm and the sun shining through a hazy kind of mist. In a short time something very like what I have described came into my line of vision and at roughly the same distance from where I stood.

"But the light was improving all of the time and in a matter of seconds I discovered that what I took to be the Monster was nothing more than a few cormorants, and what seemed to be the head was a cormorant standing in the water and flapping its wings as they often do. The other cormorants, which were strung out in a line behind the leading bird, looked in the poor light and at first glance to be just like the body of humps of the Monster, as it has been described by various witnesses.

"But the most important thing was, that owing to the uncertain light the bodies of the birds were magnified out of proportion to their proper size. This miragelike effect I have often seen on Loch Ness, although not exactly in the same form as I have just described. Other people, who know the loch, can verify my statements as to the mirage, but it only

occurs under certain conditions and if the loch is calm. Then it gives every object – from, say, a gull or a bottle to an empty barrel – a very grotesque appearance provided that such objects are far enough away from the observer. . . ."

A hazy atmosphere, low sunlight and poor visibility will undoubtedly explain away some of the Loch Ness sightings. Such conditions in other parts of the world will also provide an explanation for some reports of sea serpents and lake leviathans. The mirage effect around water is well known to fishermen and seamen. But this phenomenon cannot be used to rule out close sightings of many marine monsters. There have been a large number of reports with definite descriptions of creatures with eyes, manes, humps and other extremities. These reports fit into patterns that indicate there are unknown creatures beneath the depths.

In his scholarly, but interesting *In The Wake of Sea Serpents* (Hill & Wang; New York, 1968), Dr. Bernard Heuvelmans presented a carefully selected corpus of evidence for the existence of these creatures. After detailing the reports on various sightings throughout the world, Dr. Heuvelmans classified the eyewitness descriptions into seven categories. They include:

Marine saurians: This would be an ocean specimen with the appearance of a giant lizard or a large crocodile. However, the oceanic creature would be much larger than the species we recognize.

The widow of an Inverness attorney suggested that the Loch Ness monster was a crocodile. In a letter in the *London Daily Mail*, Mrs. J.S. Fraser gave her reasons:

". . . About 1888, when I first came to visit my husband's family. . . we were warned to be very careful of the crocodile if we went on the rocks on

Loch Ness shore near Dores. . . .

"My father-in-law told me that a man he knew very well went out to South Africa as a young man and returned in middle life. He took a small croft (a small farm). . . and, because he had formed a liking for them, he wrote to a friend in South Africa to send him three young crocodiles.

"They arrived and were kept in a specially built tank on the croft. As they grew bigger their owner became afraid of them and decided to send them to a zoo. While he was in correspondence with the zoo, one of the crocodiles disappeared and was never found. It is believed that it made its way into Loch Ness."

Crocodiles are accustomed to a warm, tropical environment. If the creature did end up in the loch, it was undoubtedly frozen to death during its first winter in the chilly waters.

Super Otter: Dr. Heuvelmans reported this grayish, long-tailed animal to be elongated, with two webbed feet, no fins, and an absence of humps. The two webbed feet are used for swimming. A quadruped, the super otter would probably live in coastal waters along the continental shelves. These oceanic beasts would probably be larger than the species we now know.

Otters have been suggested as an explanation for the Loch Ness monster because a family of these animals, swimming in a line, might resemble the head, humped back and tail of an aquatic monster. R. Elmhirst, director of the Scottish Marine Biological Association, reported on his disconcerting experience in the *London Daily Mail* (27, x, 33), telling of a "sea serpent" he saw with a reptilian head, lashing tail and undulating body. He wrote:

". . . I watched this 'creature' for an hour through field glasses. The reptilian head was a dog otter, the

first hump on the surface was the mother, and the second hump and lashing tail were baby otters.

"The dog otter, swimming with its head erect, had seen me and given warning. The mother and babies dived, and I was just in time to see the dog otter's head and the back of the others. They stretched over eighteen feet of water."

About the same time, another letter to the *London Daily Telegraph* suggested the Loch Ness creature was a South American otter. "Probably some British traveler has let one or more of these creatures loose in the Loch," wrote the correspondent. "As the South American otter can grow to twelve feet in length, its appearance might qualify it as a 'monster' to a sighter unfamiliar with the creature."

Super Eel: Heuvelmans felt this classification would cover those sightings that report on a snakelike creature moving through the ocean. With huge eyes, the giant eel would undulate rapidly through the water. The eel would also give the appearance of having a neck when the head is raised high out of the water.

Many Finned: This mammal would have a row of triangular fins running down the top of its back. With a short neck, small eyes and a round head, the creature would fit many descriptions of sea serpents and lake monsters. Dr. Heuvelmans noted that this creature apparently prefers warm, tropical waters as most sightings have occurred in those regions.

Long necker: This sea animal would have a round neck of considerable length, small eyes and a large, rather bulky body. Four webbed feet would provide a means of propulsion through the water. If a tail exists on the creature, it would be a small stump. A characteristic of this animal would be the ability to move through water at fast speeds. Observers have said the long neckers travel at twelve to thirty knots.

Mer Horse: Another unknown sea animal with an elongated body, a Mer Horse would have a head shaped like a horse or camel. Some witnesses have described the Mer Horse as being from 30 to 100 feet in length. The body is believed to be smooth and shiny; it is sometimes gray, at other times dark brown in color.

Many Humped: Small, bright eyes, a medium-length slender neck, and a series of dorsal humps of the same size are characteristics of this creature. Dr. Heuvelmans reported on thirty-three sightings of such an animal around the world. Another feature of this species is a white stripe down the sides of the neck.

Following the series of sightings around Loch Ness in the early nineteen thirties, a variety of explanations were developed. The letters columns of English newspapers provide some of the most entertaining reading in those publications. Readers make comments on virtually any subject you can imagine, argue with each other's opinions, and sometimes, develop into a national personality due to their opinionated letters. The English editor or reporter who misses a fact will soon find his credentials discussed in the paper's letters column.

Dr. Heuvelmans' theory of a giant eel received considerable discussion in the London papers following the thirties sightings. A correspondent to the *London Times* (17, i, 34) wrote:

". . . Among many strange exhibits to be found at the Marine Biological Laboratory in Copenhagen, there is an eel larva which may possibly help towards a solution of the Loch Ness mystery. It was brought to Denmark by the Marine Investigation Expedition which, under the leadership of Professor Johannes Schmidt, sailed around the world in 1930 in the *Dana*.

"This eel larva, now preserved in spirits of wine, is 184 cm (about six feet in length). It was fished up

off the Cape of Good Hope, and from such deep water that it was dead on arrival at the surface.

"The relevance of this eel larva to the Loch Ness monster is that if its growth had continued in like proportions to that of other eel larvae it would eventually reach a total length of 80 to 100 feet. An ordinary eel larva measures only two inches to four inches.

"Like other members of the eel family, this giant larva possesses a narrow dorsal fin along the back, two breast fins, and the usual anal fin. No eel larva approaching it in size has been found anywhere in the world before, and there is no means of knowing what it looked like when full-grown"

With Loch Ness being connected to the sea, the possible entrance of a giant eel into the lake waters should be considered.

Or is the Loch Ness monster a whale?

That theory was considered by Dr. Percy H. Grimshaw, keeper of the Natural History Department at the Royal Scottish Museum in Edinburgh. Dr. Grimshaw felt the monster was a beluga, a species of white whale. He outlined his opinions in the *Scotman* (28, x, 34), stating:

". . . So various are the theories put forth – many of them extremely wild – that it appears time for someone to make a tentative identification in accordance with the observations. In our opinion the creature will probably turn out to be a young beluga or white whale. This animal, whose home is in the Arctic seas, is said to ascend regularly large rivers, such as the St. Lawrence or the Amur. According to Bell (*History of British Quadrupeds*) it reaches a length of 12 to 16 feet or even more. When young this whale is of grayish blue color, but later on becomes first yellow and then white. There is no fin on the back, thus differing from most British whales,

and this may have misled observers. The brown color, the peculiar swaying motion, and the stirring of the water behind the animal. so well described in your issue. . . are all in keeping with our identification.

"The white whale has only been known to occur on eight occasions in Scottish waters, but it is interesting in this connection to note that a young male 8½ feet long (of a uniform mouse gray color) was taken in the river Forth on October 13, 1932!"

The various species of whales have frequently been used to explain the Loch Ness phenomenon.

The fact that the creature might be a giant sturgeon was discussed in *The Inverness Courier* (3, xi, 33). The article commented:

". . . But if the monster be a conger eel, he is more likely to subsist in fresh water than any other inhabitant of the deep, salmon and sturgeon is as likely as that it is an eel, seeing it has been known occasionally to ascend British rivers, and in size and shape the monster would seem to approximate to the reality of an unusually large sturgeon (the giant sturgeon of the Black and Caspian Seas attain a length of twenty-four feet, and sometimes more). The majority of those who have seen the monster give its size as about thirty feet."

The monster in Loch Ness could fit fairly well into the sturgeon category. A ganoid fish, a sturgeon has a tapered snout at the tip of an elongated jaw that is slightly curved upward. The fish also has a line of body plates on top of its back. A dorsal fin is located near the tail. An observer seeing the snout, fins and plates floating just above the waterline might believe an unusual monster had risen from the depths.

But, since the thirties, eyewitnesses have reported a monster about sixty feet in length. This would be about three times the size of the largest known

sturgeon. The Nessie-as-sturgeon theory remains unproven!

The deceased American naturalist, Dr. William Beebe, was noted for his adventurous deep-ocean dives inside a steel observation ball. A director of the New York Zoological Society's Tropical Research Department, Dr. Beebe felt the beastie in the loch was a giant squid.

"The squid theory fits the descriptions given by most of the eyewitnesses," Dr. Beebe informed newsmen during a press conference. "It would account for the size of the creature because squid reach some fantastic proportions. Squid, or cuttlefish, are known to reach at least fifty feet in length."

A news reporter protested. "But a squid doesn't have humps. How do you explain that?"

"The long arms might undulate in and out of the water," explained Dr. Beebe. "That would account for reports of humps sticking out of the water. I want to add that the Loch Ness monster had been known to move comparatively slowly along the water, as I saw it, and to travel at a great speed and setting up a great wave. It is significant that the giant squid normally moves slowly, but, when alarmed, it travels much more quickly by means of drawing in water and expelling it. That might account for the high speed it has been known to develop at times, and for the waves set up as it moved."

While Dr. Beebe and several other investigators became fervent advocates of the giant squid explanation, they failed to mention that the largest known invertebrate animal has never been known to live in fresh water. The smaller, common squid needs a salt water environment. There is no evidence to indicate the common, or giant, squid can adjust to a fresh-water area.

A plausible theory was developed by A.C. Oudemans

in *The Loch Ness Animal* (Leyden; London, 1934). The Dutch investigator suggested that eyewitness reports indicated the monster was an unknown species, a long-necked seal. The long-necked seal, according to Oudemans, would be a giant among the species. The head would be small, flat, and tapered to a conical snout. Eyes would be tiny slits set high upon the head. Oudemans also felt there would probably be light-colored hair around the eyes, giving the impression they were larger than their actual size. The "horns" mentioned by a number of sighters would probably be ears held high above the head.

The head would be attached to the body by a long, muscular neck that widens near the shoulder area. Large, thick, heavy and barrel-shaped, the long-necked seal's body would feature three or more dorsal humps. The mythical seal's fur would be light in color, abrasive when dry, shiny when wet. Oudemans felt the animal would be reddish brown in color; some would be olive drab with a tinted, lighter belly. He felt the young long-neckers would be orangish for some time after their birth. The giant seal would have four flippers formed into three distinct digits. From a distance, these digits could be mistaken for claws or hooves.

Although a seal has never been discovered in Loch Ness, it is conceivable that one might slip unobserved through the canal and enter the lake. The trouble with Oudemans' hypothesis is that he "invents" a creature to match the evidence. The witnesses at Loch Ness and throughout the world have reported heads, necks and eyes that are anything but seallike in their characteristics. As seals do not have tails, we would have to toss away sightings reporting these appendages. As many of the sightings reported humps, it was natural to assume the "long-necked seal" would have a row of dorsal projections.

Besides the explanations mentioned, many others have been discussed. Some become popular for a time, then fade away as another hypothesis gains credibility. Porpoises, Australian sunfish, Manta Rays, salamanders, turtles, sharks and ribbon fish have their followers among loch watchers. One Nessie enthusiast went to the ridiculous extreme of trying to claim the monster was a giant catfish. There is a catfish found in Europe's Danube River that grows to ten to fourteen feet in length. Due to a repulsive appearance, legends claim these catfish have eaten unwary anglers. They are regarded by many fishermen with superstitious fear. But catfish of that size and species have never been found outside the Danube or its tributaries.

And so the arguments have raged since the flap of sightings in the thirties.

". . . Nessie is a figment of the imagination!"

". . . She is an unknown species!"

". . . A giant eel!"

Eyewitness reports are not reliable. Besides, how could a large species of some unknown aquatic animal remain undetected on such a well-traveled lake? The experts come flying in for a quick visit and leave scornfully when the monster fails to make a personal appearance. Science requires positive proof that Nessie, lake monsters and sea serpents exist. They want something that can be measured, passed around, and laid out on the laboratory table. Nessie enthusiasts agree with the need for caution. Yet it would be helpful if scientists tried to solve the mystery rather than claiming that lake monsters just aren't nice, that they're best left alone. Many scientists feel there is a conspiracy of idiots outside the mansions of academia. All of these crazy people are running about claiming they've seen Nessie, sea serpents, UFOs and other things science knows don't exist.

If and when the mystery behind the monster in Loch Ness is solved, the credit will belong to a small band of hearty monster hunters, amateur scientists and investigators and an even smaller group of reputable scientists. We can only hope their efforts will soon be rewarded with positive, irrefutable evidence.

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